OPEN LETTER TO THE READING PUBLIC

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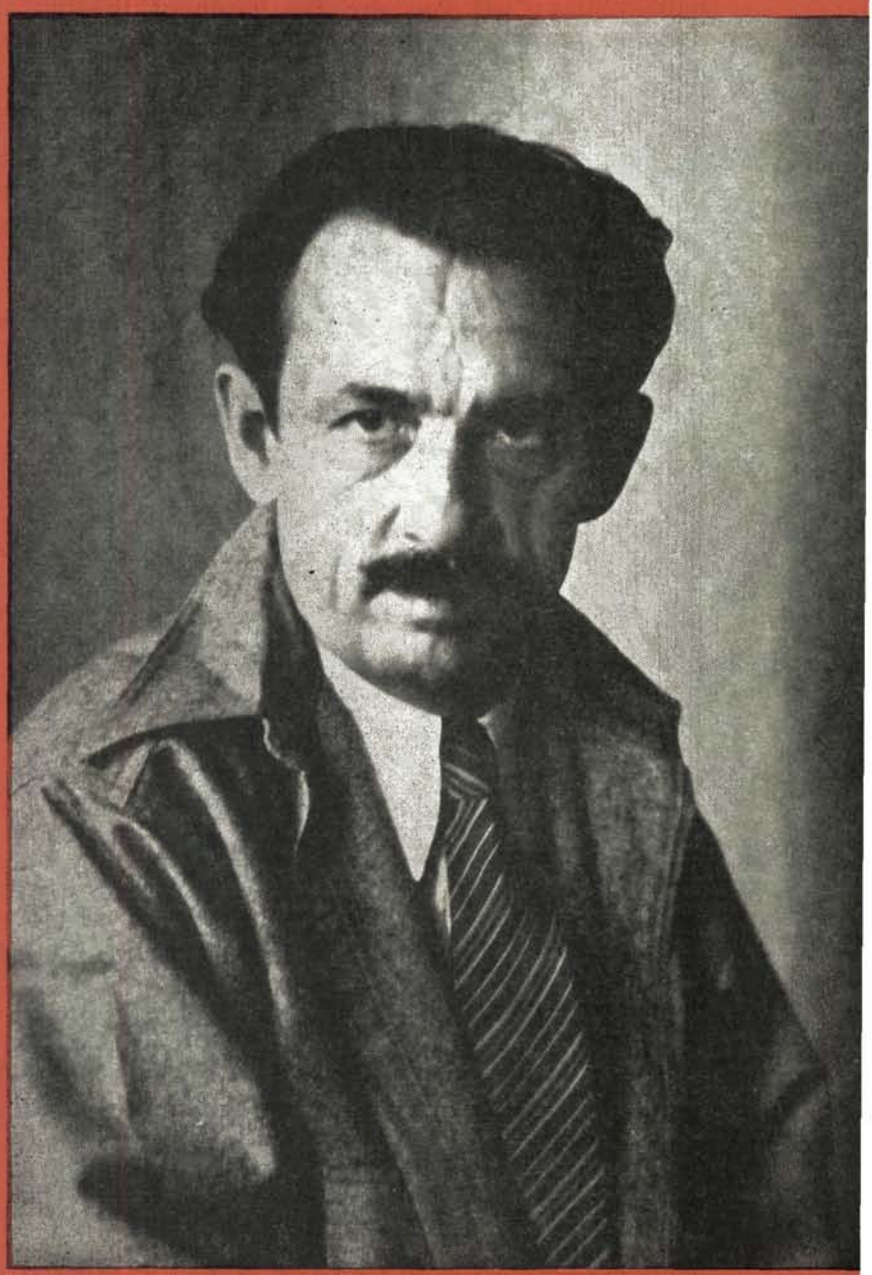

THOMAS HART BENTON: "Many Missourians called Benton's murals caricatures. They will call his illustrations of 'Tom Sawyer' caricatures also. But they are not caricatures" . . . *(See page 5)*

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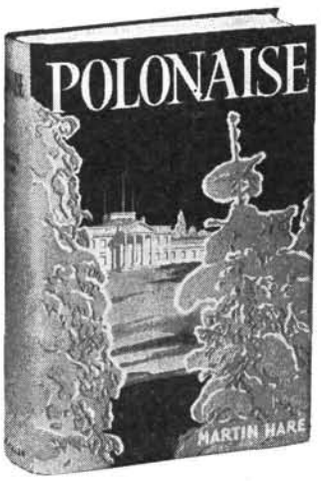
The Author of "English Rue"
Writes Another
Fine Novel—



Polonaise
BY MARTIN HARE

A STORY of two ways of life—English and Polish—as seen through the candid eyes of children, principally. But every reader will find also the depth of thought, distinctive flavor, humor and literary charm characteristic of Martin Hare's work.

Three English children, aged ten to fifteen, are sent to live with relatives in Warsaw. Their reactions to the unfamiliar, almost-feudal environment; their gradual absorption of the historic and romantic background as their own, provide the framework for a story that will remain a poignant experience long after this book has been laid down. $2.50

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"TESTAMENT OF YOUTH"

Testament of Friendship
BY VERA BRITTAIN

"A picture of a life, as quickly, as intelligently, as fully lived as any, where there was still richness in love and work, and joy in loyalty."
—SATURDAY REVIEW OF LIT.

"Interesting not only as biography, but more broadly as the chronicle of a friendship and as the reflection of a time and place."
—NEW YORK TIMES

"The book is valuable for what its title implies—proof out of real life that friendship did not die with the generation of Emerson."
$2.50 ***—N. Y. HERALD-TRIBUNE***

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY

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OPEN LETTER
TO THE READING PUBLIC

The Saturday Review **rarely publishes an anonymous article. We believe our readers will agree that this "Open Letter" is eminently worth publishing, and that the reasons for anonymity are obvious. The author—who unquestionably is speaking for many others—has written several novels of distinction and wide popularity, and has frequently contributed to leading magazines.**

DEAR Bankers, Rotarians, Librarians, Teachers, Parents, Pupils, Church Groups, Club Members Everywhere:

I am asked (mutely) by all the professional writers of the world, but especially by the poets and novelists of America assembled here with me today (invisibly), to tell you that your letters of the last month have been received. Perhaps not all of them, but most of them. And the messages you have left at our doors and by telephone—these too, in general, have been passed on to us by our maid, housekeeper, secretary, butler, or house boy as the case may be, *and* by our guests whom you caught sunbathing in the back yard, or by our resident elderly aunt whom you found in the garden or hall because she has such a lame knee that she cannot scamper into hiding as fast as others have learned to do. Most of these messages have reached us, more or less in the original. And we want to thank you, our public, with sincere gratitude for whatever interest you feel, whether expressed or not, in our work.

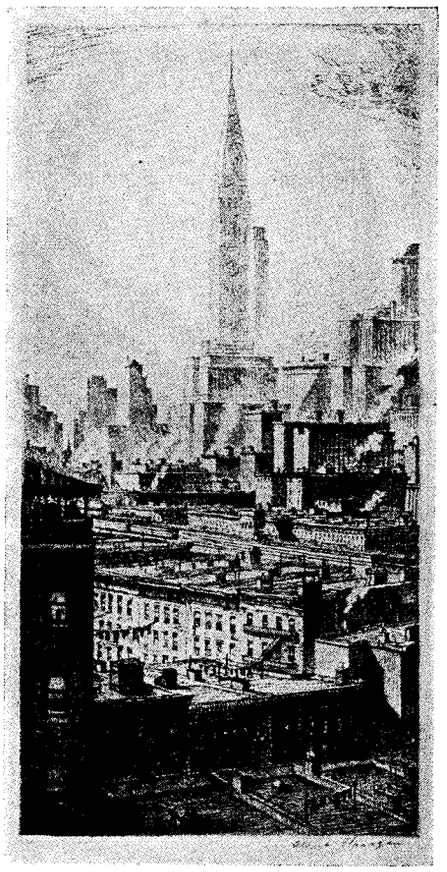
Most of us write because we cannot help it, only a few of us because we find the work pleasant. Generally it is a little too hard and constantly demanding to be pure pleasure. But even knowing that what we say is used in any way, even as a bad example, is a kind of gratification, and so being told that what we say, or the way we say it, or both, has cut a window through a blank wall anywhere, makes almost any day a fine one. And in our eagerness to cut more and more such windows or cut the old ones larger, most of us can be prevailed upon occasionally, some of us quite often and easily, to leave our own desks, our own living-room, garden, family and personal friends, to go out carpentering by hand, so to speak. I mean, you know, most of us will, at least sometimes, undertake to make speeches in public, or give readings from our "works". We answer letters, too, an extraordinary number; and even call back strangers on the telephone. Not every one, not invariably, but too often for our own good, and for yours.

Too often, that is, if it is the writing of books for which we are most gifted or even only best fitted; too often if it is, after all, books which you most want and need from us.

The question is, do you want your favorite writer to remain a writer after he becomes your favorite, or do you feel it is now high time for him to leave writing to those who haven't yet learned how, high time for him to devote his time and energy, in the morning to correspondence, in the afternoon to receiving callers, in the evening to the lecture platform and the microphone? If the latter, have you estimated for how long a period he will in this way maintain his happy position as your favorite writer?

It is not much to answer a letter, you say. You think, "I am a teacher, and my pupils are interested in that man. They'll be reading him twenty, thirty years from now, if he makes himself in a way their personal friend and keeps their interest. It's little enough for him just to write Mary Lou that he is pleased she has read his book and wants to make a class report on him, just to tell her how he happened to become a writer, what his hobbies are, what his religion is and why, and what he thinks of the European situation."

But of course they won't be reading him twenty or thirty years from now, or at least he will not know it, if he tries to fulfill even his single obligation. Because there are thirty million school children in America, and there is a new generation of Seniors, Juniors, Eighth-Graders every year. He will have died long ago, and if any money still results from this gargantuan task he undertook, the chances are that it will not even be going to his immediate descendants who too likely will all have been tragically killed off in the hour that he went berserk.



"New York is a perfect hiding-place —until you are found out" . . . (Etching by Albert Flanagan, from "Contemporary American Prints.")

It is not so much to answer a letter. You think, "I'll just write and ask her if she will come to speak to our Friendly Guild. We have hardly any money, but we do a good deal for charity. We could pay ten dollars but I don't think she ought to ask it. Maybe she will come without charge. Anyway, I'll tell her about the purpose of our group, and the low treasury, and ask her what her fee is. She can at least answer, say yes or no. That won't take long. And don't they all have secretaries?"

No. They don't.

Speaking, for instance, for myself, I don't. I have written a book which nearly everybody read, others which were conspicuous on national best seller lists for many weeks, you have seen my characters on the screen, I publish short stories regularly in popular magazines. You might think I

Next Week

AFTER MANY A SUMMER DIES THE SWAN
By ALDOUS HUXLEY
Reviewed by George Catlin

HAPPY DAYS
By H. L. MENCKEN
Reviewed by Jonathan Daniels

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could have a secretary, and I suppose I could, but I don't. Because I live the year around in a country house, and a secretary, to be available at all, would have to live with me. But I don't want a secretary living with me. She wouldn't like it here; she would be bored; we should be forever trying to amuse her, not to offend her. If I had a secretary, I could not write at all,—only dictate letters to her, see the people she felt I should see, and be reminded by her of all my engagements, some of which now I mercifully forget.

So it goes. Some have secretaries, and some don't. Either way, if we are to find time and peace in which to write, we must perforce make use of some barricade between ourselves and you, some means of secret escape from you. Which continually makes us—and you—more or less uncomfortable. You surely wish it need not be and so do we. But without your understanding and coöperation, it is the only method by which we can save ourselves at all for that work for which we seem primarily to have been intended.

Many Midwestern writers hide in New York City six months of the year. It is a perfect hiding-place—until you are found out. New York writers, having been found out years ago, must move on to parts of the world where their books have not yet been translated. Hundreds of us have hidden in the country, but as paved roads penetrate more and more deeply we must dig deeper and deeper into isolated regions.

Another unhappy aspect of the situation is—from our point of view and probably from yours—that most of us are restless in hiding. The majority of writers are gregarious folk; they like other human beings, like to talk with them, smoke with them, drink with them, argue with them, listen to and watch them. You are not only our Ultimate Consumers, not even only our potential friends whom we do wish to make and to keep, but most of all you are our stock in trade. Unless we know you, enough of you, we cannot speak truly to, of, or for you.

No, it is not best for us—or for you—that we should hide. Nor should we need to, if only—*if only*—you would let us come and go, pick our way about the world freely, as other human beings do.

This is all we need,—just what you have, and never question:—our daily time to work (that is, *to write*), the natural privacy of our homes and gardens for ourselves and our personal friends, and our program of evenings to be divided as seems reasonable to us among our correspondents, our platform appearances, our turns at sitting in the audience, and our lazy twilights at home.

We should not mind your driving past our houses if we could feel sure that you would not come in, without an appointment.

We should not mind your telephoning if you would be considerate enough to leave your message and not be offended if we do not reply when we have no reply worth making.

We should be happy to receive your letters if you would make it clear, where possible, that you are only registering your opinion of our work and do not expect an answer. If you would try to make easy the probable refusal of your invitation to assist in your club program. If you could realize that while "just to write a letter" or "just to say a few words" once is not much to ask, every poet and popular novelist has hundreds more such possible obligations than he can possibly fulfill. If you could understand that while your charity is your charity, we, too, have our charities, and cannot help with all the others in the world any more than you can. *If you would try to believe that we are people, too!*

But this, for instance, Dear Public, was a summer day of mine:

I had made exactly three engagements. The first, for the full morning between breakfast and lunch, was with myself at the desk. The second, for the afternoon, was with my father and mother and my little girl. (She is seven and they are seventy. I have not had long with her, as lifetimes go, and shall not have long, now, with them. We were to drive as far as we could along an old road, leave the car and walk together to where we used to camp when my sisters and I were young. We would take supper in a basket and eat it by the swimming hole.) The third, for the evening, was with you. You were to call at my house at seven-thirty, to drive me ten miles to a hall where I was to address you for three-quarters of an hour and then to answer as many questions as you wished to ask —without charge, because your purposes were good, your benefit necessary, and you were to take me only ten miles away and to bring me home afterward.

Those were my engagements. It made a full program but I thought it right and reasonable, and I felt equal to it.

The day came. I went to my desk at nine o'clock. At 9:30 you called me on the telephone. You told my maid that you *had* to speak to me. You said it was something about the evening. I pulled up my stakes. I went back downstairs.

You said, "Oh, I've just finished getting together eleven perfectly charming people for dinner before the program tonight. I didn't dare mention it before because I wouldn't have thought of asking you unless—but now that I know I'll have L. D. who did those marvelous murals and E.

(*Continued on page* 14)

Where the Doe Awakes

BY JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

THE night came slowly over the fading edge.
It was the dark one hardly saw appear.
One forgot sun lingered on the ridge
where now the beautiful gloom hides the warm deer.

It is strange that in the darkness no hungry wing is whirring,
and no deer is the target when the living body glistens
through dull deceptive branches. No enemy is boring
through the place that nightfall fashioned. The silent friend listens.

He knows that morning, with sound of woodland blending
with the human tread that is not of this furry place,
shall bring forth another herd, armed and grimly commanding
the eyes that have never seen behind the doe's face.

The morning shall come. And where the doe awakes
and seeks what is needed, the daytime way shall be run.
Pray, night, you have strength for the long bright day that forsakes
this shining courage that leaps ahead of the gun.

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Benton's "Tom Sawyer"

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER. By Mark Twain. Illustrated by Thomas Hart Benton. Introduction by Bernard DeVoto. New York: The Limited Editions Club. 371 *pp.*

Reviewed by CLYDE BRION DAVIS

ORDINARILY, a new edition of "Tom Sawyer" would be nothing to put on your Sunday suit and shine your shoes over. A new edition of "Tom Sawyer" is scarcely an innovation. Possibly Bernard DeVoto, who seems to be making a profession out of Mark Twain, may know how many editions of "Tom Sawyer" have come off the presses to date. I don't suppose anyone else does—not even Harper's. This edition of "Tom Sawyer" may be the one hundreth or the five hundreth. But it's an event. It's an event because of the Thomas Hart Benton illustrations—seventy of them.

Not many Missouri farmers will move "The Horrors of the Johnstown Flood" to the china closet, making a place of honor on the marble-topped center table beside the Family Bible —not for Tom Benton's "Tom Sawyer." Thomas Hart Benton is one of the greatest living American artists and he's a third-generation Missourian, but that doesn't matter. His great-uncle was Senator Thomas Hart (Old Bullion) Benton, who is well-nigh the patron saint of the state. In Missouri there is one town of Benton, which is the county seat of Scott County, and another town of Benton, which is a suburb of St. Louis. There is a Benton City in Audrian County. There's a Benton Park in Jackson County, a Bentonville in Benton County and Benton Streets, Benton Avenues, and Benton Boulevards in a good share of the other communities. But that doesn't matter either.

Despite the hallowed name of Benton, Missouri farmers do not like the art of Thomas Hart Benton. They stood aghast before his murals in the State House. Missouri farmers want their murals in the dignified mode of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. They want Missourians depicted as dreamy-faced, broad-shouldered young men and deep-bosomed women standing in quiet dignity before compositions of shocked golden wheat and cog wheels, with railroad trains, setting suns, and steamboats in the background. Benton gave them Huck Finn and Jim, Jesse James holding up a train, and—most shocking of all—the shooting of the fabled and faithless Johnny by the equally fabled and outraged Frankie.

There was life and color and action to Benton's extraordinary murals. But no quiet dignity. Many Missourians called Benton's murals caricatures. They will call his illustrations of "Tom Sawyer" caricatures also. But they are not caricatures. They are delightful and whimsical and full of the real spirit of this timeless classic. Mark Twain was delighted by the illustrations of E. W. Kemble. He would have been enraptured by this work of Benton. The Missouri artist's genius is a perfect complement to the genius of the Missourian Mark Twain. His drawings add another dimension to a beloved book.

Bernard DeVoto's 20-page introduction is wise and restrained. He offers a shrewd analysis of the Mark Twain of "Tom Sawyer." He is, I believe, exactly right in calling this book a universal myth rather than a realistic portrayal of midwestern childhood a century ago. I would question only one point Mr. DeVoto makes. Generally speaking, I will accept the criticism of Mark Twain's Victorianism in ignoring sex as sex. But not in "Tom Sawyer." I suspect Freudians draw too many conclusions about normal childhood from case records of abnormal childhood. In the thoughts of a normal, busy country boy of ten or twelve I do not believe sex ranks as important as his order to fill the woodbox every evening. He'll forget the woodbox often enough, too.

Included in the book is Mark Twain's first attempt to write some of the "Tom Sawyer" material. It takes the form of a boy's diary and is quite bad. It was lucky for him and lucky for us, too, that he abandoned that project.

Drawings on this page reproduced from Thomas Benton's two-color illustrations for "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer."

Martin Hare's Ironical Novel

POLONAISE. By Martin Hare. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 273 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

MARTIN HARE, who is equally at home in urban and rural England, France, and Poland, chooses Warsaw as the background of her new novel. "Polonaise" was completed last June, three months before the brutal and senseless mutilation of the beautiful capital, with the destruction of thousands of its citizens and the extinguishing, one fears, of most of the cultural and all of the economic gains of the reborn Polish nation of the past twenty years. One reads of the pleasant streets and imposing public buildings, of the houses, gardens, and byways mantled with snow or smothered with lilac, of the gracious, rich, and satisfying life of one Polish family—one reads these things with a heaviness of spirit. It is like reading a gay and lively letter received after

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Kay Vaughan
Martin Hare

a telegram has brought news of the death of its writer.

This well-written novel, however, is by no means cheerless, and the greater irony we read into it is outside the author's intention. Like Martin Hare's other novels, "Polonaise" is gently ironical, almost malicious in some of its portraits, and there is an occasional flash of dry cynicism that recalls Somerset Maugham or Rose Macaulay. Better than the wit and irony is the humor, sympathetic and wise. Here wisdom and understanding and humor are inseparable, as they should be, especially in the characterizations.

"Polonaise" is on the surface a simple story of three English children who go to live with relatives in Poland while their parents try to come to a final decision over certain details of their impending divorce. The children learn to like their Polish cousins and their odd ways of life, and return to England with considerable regret. But "Polonaise" is far more complex than this brief synoposis would imply. Martin Hare's shrewd knowledge of people, her sensitiveness to subtle national differences, her perspicacious and skillful handling of the children, her awareness of the vast cultural and historical forces of our time give depth and substance to the novel. Perhaps the most piquant parts of the book are those in which the well brought-up English children are contrasted with the well brought-up Polish youngsters. The English children, with conventional dependence on synthetic amusement, lack the resources of the seemingly more child-like Poles to make a satisfying pattern of their daily lives. Eventually, however, they begin to experience the fun of being just children. Readers who enjoyed "English Rue" two years ago will not be disappointed in "Polonaise."

Haven in America

THE CRADLE BUILDER. By Walter Schoenstedt. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 280 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THE struggle of two young and and poor lovers to fortify themselves and build a haven in a world such as this one, where love and havens are diminishing, is always a stirring story. When one of the two is, further, a German emigré, searching for freedom in America, the story takes on added dimensions as well as added responsibilities. On the whole these have been discharged well, with a reservation. The love and marriage of Peter Volkers and his American Ellen are handled very sensitively, with a grasp of the delicate factors of personality and adjustment involved and a careful avoidance of overwriting, which must have been a great temptation. Yet overwriting was not necessary, for with a skillful economy of detail Mr. Schoenstedt has permitted Peter to tell all that was needful of his past experiences. They are all the more effective for their sparseness.

Pinchot
Walter Schoenstedt

Peter and his German friends in America are excellently presented. It is with Ellen that our reservation appears.

Peter declares, and Mr. Schoenstedt as well, that his salvation depends upon his learning to know her spirit, and through her, the American spirit and way of life. But—it may be elementary to make this observation—Peter's knowledge can be no better than Mr. Schoenstedt's and Mr. Schoenstedt's view of Ellen as an American girl leaves us doubtful that Peter will ever come to know the American mind. To give an instance, when he asks her, "What feeling do you have when you think of Lincoln?" (a good question, and one that might have brought a significant response), Ellen replies "I have the feeling of tremendous fields of ripe grain." It is a possible idea, certainly. But it is not the American feeling for Lincoln. It is something mystical, inflated, spiritually pretentious, and not likely to occur to anyone who has grown up with the Lincoln legend. This is Ellen's limitation; she is herself a mirror for Peter's desires, and the answers are still far to seek.

The Game of Murder

SAME WAY HOME. By Rupert Croft-Cooke. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 359 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THE parlor game of "Murder," in which a player in a darkened room pretends to strangle a fellow-player, has dramatic possibilities which have been used in more than one detective story. It has psychological possibilities too, which Mr. Croft-Cooke sets out to explore in this novel. He assembles a comfortable, conventional pair of parents, Colonel and Mrs. Macauley, and their less conventional children, and includes in the party young Geoffrey Macauley's mistress, whom he can do neither with nor without. When it is Geoffrey's turn to be murderer, he puts his hands around her neck; she screams with the hysteria he has learned to hate; he irritably tightens his fingers—and finds himself with a dead woman on his hands, not quite sure himself how far he was guilty in intention.

The psychological problems presented by Geoffrey and his family in this crisis, and the suspense aroused by the question of whether or not Geoffrey will be hanged, are plentiful material for a novel; and the author might have done better to limit himself to this. But he has in addition provided several additional problems, on which the death is supposed to act as a reagent, bringing them to their solution. One can understand the dangerous attraction of this conception, but it has proved too ambitious for success. We can accept the religious hysteria of one of Geoffrey's sisters as being sufficiently relevant; but there is no good reason why the death should precipitate the relations of Geoffrey's other sister and the gardener's boy.

All that is accomplished by introducing these extraneous problems is to rob Geoffrey's own situation of the tightness of suspense which it should have. This inadequacy of treatment to theme is the more marked because all the characters, from Goeffrey's conventional father to his conventionally unconventional sister, are scarcely more than puppets, who might sustain an ordinary murder story, but who creak and totter under the weight of a psychological drama.

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Milton and His Milieu

MILTON'S LITERARY MILIEU. By George Wesley Whiting. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1939. 401 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

MILTON IN CHANCERY. By J. Milton French. New York: The Modern Language Association of America (Monograph Series, X). 1939. 428 *pp., with index.* $4.

Reviewed by A. M. WITHERSPOON

THESE two latest works by Professor Whiting and Professor French are, in different ways, contributions to the growing list of studies which seek, like Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard's "The Miltonic Setting," to attach Milton more firmly to his age, and to reveal further aspects of him as a poet and a citizen of seventeenth-century England. Neither of them attempts to prove a thesis, and neither is concerned with what is called inspirational or impressionistic literary criticism. Both authors place their materials at the disposal of the student of Milton for whatever use he may make of them, content with having thrown some more light on the man John Milton, in his habit as he lived and read and wrote.

Professor French's book is the more restricted in scope, and deals solely with the legal battles with which Milton and his father were concerned. The book comprises details of the lives of the two men which have for the most part not hitherto been available to readers interested in Milton. The substance of all the suits dealt with is financial and purely civil in nature.

The author suggests that the reader who hopes for the thrill of finding Milton or his scrivener father involved in a shooting affray or other criminal action will be disappointed. Professor French's examination of the suits and the legal proceedings reveals the elder Milton as a broker of far-flung interests, trusted by men of wealth, busy and successful, and Milton the poet as a dilettante in legal matters, disliking and distrusting lawyers in general, and clashing with them on occasion. The author finds little evidence of any effect on Milton's character, personality, or writing, of his experiences with courts and lawyers. They perhaps emphasized the controversial bent in his character, but such other influence as they may have had is slight.

John Milton

Professor Whiting casts his net more widely, and gathers in a varied assortment of contemporary materials which Milton knew or might have known and used—"hexaemeral, historical, cartographical, psychological, poetical, and controversial." Several of the chapters are revised and amplified versions of articles which have appeared in periodicals. The author attempts to provide some part of the extensive and complex background of Milton's poetry and prose, by a comprehensive survey of which all limited and specific studies must be corrected. He rightly takes to task those scholars who too blithely attribute Milton's ideas in large part to some specific source. Of all English poets Milton's culture was the richest. As heir and student of Scripture and rabbinical commentaries, the classics, the Renaissance tradition in general, and English and Italian literature in particular, and as a great genius and poet in his own right, Milton has made it well-nigh impossible for scholars to point with certainty to his specific sources, or to discuss with assurance his methods of adapting them. The sources of much of his material and of his ideas, as Professor Whiting says, Milton alone, and perhaps not even he, could tell.

The author makes it clear that his book is not so much a study of sources as of literary relations, and the tracing of the currency of ideas, and he offers it modestly as a supplement to other studies devoted to Milton's work and to the discovery of his sources. Of special interest, perhaps, are the chapters dealing with Milton's knowledge and use of contemporary histories and maps, and the impressive part played in his poetry by the atlases of his day. That Milton derived from Bacon's ecclesiastical tracts moral if not material support, Professor Whiting maintains, and he is the first to identify as Bacon the "learned English writer" to whom Milton refers in his pamphlet, "Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline". That the formal refutation in the same pamphlet is a direct reply to Lord Digby's Speech in the Commons is, perhaps, the most interesting of Professor Whiting's specific discoveries, and regarded as such the refutation assumes a dramatic character not sufficiently appreciated hitherto. The probable influence on Milton of More's "Encomium Moriae" and of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" is demonstrated. It is to Milton's achievements in poetry and prose which both express and transcend his age, and to the poet who was nourished by an incomparably richer culture than our century knows, that Professor Whiting pays homage and directs the attention of his fellow-scholars.

The Sociology of the City Room

NEWS AND THE HUMAN INTEREST STORY. By Helen MacGill Hughes. The University of Chicago Sociological Series. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1940. 313 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by CHARLES MCD. PUCKETTE

THIS book is an interesting and at times odd mixture. Much of it has the real flavor of the city room plus a shrewd perspective on day-by-day journalism; and some of it is a bit pedantic, perhaps in deference to its sociological parentage. This quotation is a fair sample (it is from the introduction, but it might well have been Mrs. Hughes's own):

> In fact, the reason we have newspapers at all, in the modern sense of the term, is because about one hundred years ago, in 1835 to be exact, a few newspaper publishers in New York City and in London discovered (1) that most human beings, if they could read at all, found it easier to read news than editorial opinion and (2) that the common man would rather be entertained than edified. This, in its day, had the character and importance of a real discovery. It was like the discovery, made later in Hollywood, that gentlemen prefer blondes.

Perhaps most newspapers as they are today owe their wide circulations and even their existence to the entertainment of the human interest story, but it could reasonably be argued that quite a different kind of journalism could have been developed in the United States as it has abroad. However, the larger part of Mrs. Hughes's book is good, crisp reading. She does not make enough of the kind of human interest story which is outside the scope of yellow or tabloid journalism—the sort which legitimately can make the first pages of even the most serious of newspapers. The pedantic side of the volume shows itself in the tracing of the newspaper's human interest as the lineal descendant of the folk ballad. However, do not let this keep anyone from reading a good newspaper book.

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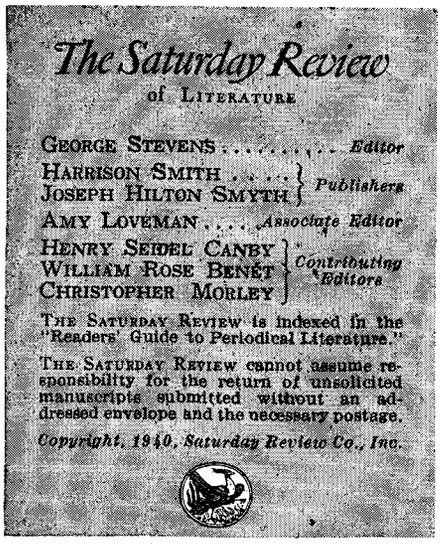
The Saturday Review
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The Gallup Poll of Authors

THE first thought that struck us, on comparing the replies of Authors with those of the general public on the Gallup Poll questionnaire (*SRL*, Jan. 13), is that authors are very much like other people. This will not be startling to those who know authors. On questions about the war in Europe, the divergences in the replies might as easily be explained by the lapse of time between the two polls as by the difference between the groups polled. National results of AIPO surveys, published in September, showed 48% of those expressing an opinion believing that the United States would eventually go into the European war; the Authors' Poll shows only 31% with this belief. In September the National AIPO survey disclosed that 49% of those polled expected the war to be over in a year or less; in the Authors' Poll, only 23% expect so quick a conclusion. The nature of the war itself, as it developed during the first four months, is enough to explain these discrepancies.

A greater divergence is shown on domestic issues, where the authors came out for the New Deal in a higher percentage than the general public. Only in two cases, however, did a majority of authors vote differently from a majority of the public polled. 53% of the authors who expressed an opinion on the third term say that they will vote for Roosevelt if he runs again; only 43% in the national poll expressed this opinion. The greatest discrepancy is on the Dies Committee, where the national survey (December 15) showed 75% in favor of its continuation, whereas the authors came out 57% to 43% against. All of this was to be expected, in view of the fact that authors in general tend to be in the advance guard politically.

When the Authors' Poll was sent out, we received a number of letters from those invited to reply to the questionnaire—seven, to be exact—giving various reasons for declining to participate. Several such reasons are summed up by one correspondent, who allows us to quote from his letter but asks that his name be withheld.

"'Do you think the United States will go into the war in Europe or do you think we will stay out of the war?' This is your first question. Obviously, the United States will stay out of the war in Europe if its own interests are not visibly and seriously involved. If they are so involved, presumably we shall have to go into the war. What then could involve our interests? Does your question mean, do I think our interests will be involved? And that raises the further question of whether a combination of the totalitarian states will come into the possession of parts of the British and French empires and so hold the strategic positions from which the western hemisphere will be endangered. How in Heaven's name is anyone to answer a question like that with a 'yes' or 'no?'

"Your second question, if you will forgive me for saying so, is equally infantile. 'Which country or countries do you consider responsible for causing the present war?' One answer to that is obvious. Germany attacked Poland, which brought into operation a guarantee of Britain and France. This is not a question of opinion but of historical fact. Why send out questionnaires on historic fact? . . .

"Question No. 3: 'Do you think the United States should declare war on Germany and send our army and navy abroad to fight?' is also unanswerable by 'yes' or 'no.' If our interests are involved, and we needed to enter the war, we should have to dispose of our forces as the occasion demanded. Probably our infantry would not be needed. Probably only our financial strength and military supplies would be useful. Perhaps our navy.

"Your fourth question, 'How long do you think the war in Europe will last and which side do you think will win?' is about as intelligent as asking the Freshman class at Princeton who will win next year's baseball pennant. How does anyone know?"

Dr. George Gallup writes in reply:—

"Your correspondent is, I think, under a misapprehension concerning the function of public opinion surveys.

"We are not trying to determine absolute truths; we are only trying to measure opinions. Historians may never be able to agree on the true causes of the present war in Europe, any more than they can determine with finality the causes of the last war. But it is perfectly possible to have an opinion on the subject—an opinion which is not necessarily a final verdict, or even a true verdict, but just an opinion pure and simple. And opinion, even of this kind, is important because what people think, whether they be right or wrong, puts governments in and out of office, makes and breaks heroes, shapes the course of public policy on a thousand fronts.

"Your correspondent finds fault with the 'yes' or 'no' answer technique. I myself believe that, in this particular poll, the authors should have been given greater opportunity to express their views at length, because I am sure those views would be enlightening.

"The authors were given the same simple questions which had previously been put to men and women in the ordinary walks of life. The survey did not seek to discover all the many interlacing attitudes which it is possible to have on these subjects. Had the purpose been to elucidate shadings and qualifications, of course, the Institute would have used an entirely different ballot technique.

"But it is a matter of ordinary common sense that, while all people like to think in terms of qualifications and that most thinking is necessarily in such terms, eventually one has to come to a 'yes' or 'no' decision. Will the stock market go up or down? Only God can answer that one accurately. Yet many people unfortunately have to act on their opinions after weighing the evidence. They must decide whether to buy or not to buy. The same is true in politics. Nearly everyone would want some addition or qualification to practically every bill passed by Congress, but a time comes when there must be a vote of 'yea' or 'nay.' When the ordinary citizen enters the polling booth on election day he cannot cast his vote with 'qualifications.' He has to vote 'yes' or 'no,' or for Smith or Jones. He cannot vote for Jones with the proviso that the vote is to count only if Jones supports farm legislation.

"So when a public opinion survey asks a voter to state his opinion for or against an issue, or a candidate, it is asking him to do no more than he is already required to do thousands of times in the course of daily life."

To Dr. Gallup's letter we add a couple of points. First, our principal interest in the results of the questionnaire was in the *comparison* of the authors' replies with those of the public. Second, the objections to the poll overlook the possibility of asking the same question at various times for the purpose of comparing the public state of mind in January—say—with the public state of mind two or three months later. We hope to send out further questionnaires; meanwhile we shall welcome comments from readers.

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Letters to the Editor: *History and the Tradition; A Code for D. C. Fans*

Clio's Mansions

SIR:—Mr. Crane Brinton remarks in your issue of January 6th that "Mr. Allan Nevins never tires of pointing out" that men writing in the professional historical tradition "lose touch with the general reader almost as completely as if they were specialists confined to a technical jargon, like mathematicians or chemists."

What I never tire of pointing out is that history is a mansion with many rooms; and that it contains a place for the erudite specialist, for the coldly scientific historian, for the interpretive writer, for the historian of imagination (when held in check by fact), and for many other figures. There is a place for the monograph-writer, who is essential to historical progress; a place for the dryasdust assembler of facts; a place for the historical philosopher. I have good-naturedly protested against the contempt with which erudite authors of monographs and review-articles in our academic seats continually treat those lay historians who write books which combine sound scholarship with high literary quality. That is, I have protested against the deep-rooted fashion among academic teachers and scholars of treating any book which possesses imagination, dramatic quality, and literary grace as necessarily superficial, and which makes a merit out of writing baldly and badly. A year ago, feeling that this fashion had a paralyzing effect upon academic writing, I pointed out that the most important historical works published in 1938 came from non-academic pens. It could now be pointed out that in 1939 none of the academic group of historians in the American field published a book comparable in value with Sandburg's "Lincoln," Pringle's "Taft," Canby's "Thoreau" (as a study in cultural history), or Hendrick's "Statesmen of the Lost Cause." To point this out is not to impugn the value of a good monograph or review-article, or to deny that a place—and a very important place—exists for the scholar who is too intent upon a scientific statement to care anything for literary quality. Arguing for tolerance in the one direction, I would not be intolerant in another.

ALLAN NEVINS.

New York City.

In Reply to Will Irwin

SIR:—Regarding the Double-Crostics, I am deeply in sympathy with Mr. Will Irwin, but I think he does not plan his code of ethics quite right. The DC's are primarily for entertainment and not a religious ritual. I went through the stage Mr. Irwin describes, when I felt like a criminal if I so much as looked in a dictionary. But I now see more clearly, and I would far rather seek an answer in a reference book than leave a DC unsolved.

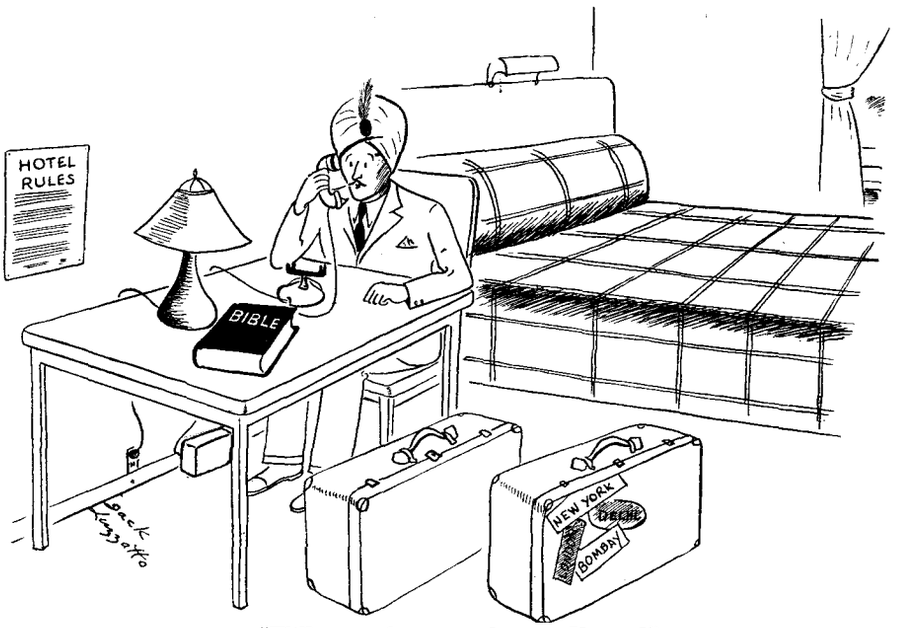
That I have never done. I have solved every one of Mrs. Kingsley's puzzles in your paper and every one in her seven books. My conscience is satisfied if I find I *cannot* go farther without a word I need, to look for it in a book.

No one can *guess* Scheherazade's Sultan, or make up the name of the goat that nursed Zeno. But after I've honorably tried to get along without it, I cheerfully hasten to my reference shelf, and track down the beast. To do so means the greatest good to the greatest number, and only a natural born martyr should have a guilty pang.

When one can do a whole DC without a needed reference to a needed authority, it is not a sign of excessive gray matter, but because Mrs. Kingsley happened to make that one without Moses's grandmother or Siegfried's sword. It all lies between you and your conscience. If you have really used every ounce of brain you possess to go further, you are justified in opening a helpful book. But if you look things up because of indolence or to hurry the game along, you are an unworthy member of Mrs. Kingsley's clan.

CAROLYN WELLS.

New York City.



"Will you please send up a Koran?"

"Hereditary American Fortunes"

SIR:—The judgment passed on Gustavus Myers in *The Saturday Review* of January 6 prompts me as a personal friend and deeply indebted reader of Mr. Myers to ask space for this dissenting view.

The judgment is in the review by William O. Scroggs of Mr. Myers's "The Ending of Hereditary American Fortunes." Mr. Scroggs says that the author "is apparently warped by a soul-searing hatred for people who have accumulated large fortunes," and that his book "is largely propaganda and muckraking, a smearing of the 'haves' . . . "

Muckraking, of course, has been justified by its fruits and is no longer a term of reproach, although here applied with that intention. But the other criticisms involve facts on which, I believe, any reviewer should know better. In his studies of the great American fortunes, Tammany Hall, the Supreme Court, and other first-rank subjects, Mr. Myers performed the bravest of pioneering—not as a warped propagandist but with a disinterested accuracy which has stood up unchallenged. It has been, in fact, the foundation for libraries of later books. That record should exempt Mr. Myers from accusations of being a rabble-rouser.

GEORGE BRITT.

New York City.

(*Mr. Scroggs properly passed judgment on the book under review, not on the author's previous work.—Ed.*)

"It Doesn't Make Sense"—Cont'd

SIR:—The other mystery cliché, and Mr. McElroy of Chicago can fill two pages of your valued Letters to the Editor space with it if he chooses, is "I don't like it"—usually uttered by sleuth as case gets thicker and thicker. Sometimes it's "I *don't* like it". As for me—I don't *like* it.

JUDGE LYNCH.

New York City.

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BOOK PREVIEW*

POETESS OF PASSION

BY JENNY BALLOU

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

FROM the crescent beach a wayfarer may have stopped on that hot summer night, dazed, to see the naptha launch transformed into a legendary barge. There, under the dangling lanterns, stood the Junoesque Julie Opp Faversham, Goddess of Liberty. Thirteen girls in Grecian draperies formed a patriotic tableau of the original states of the Union. And, as the cool salt waves of the Sound carried the fleet to shore on the strains of "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," Ella Wheeler Wilcox, American poetess of passion, alighted, followed by her costumed attendants, the good neighbors of Short-Beach-on-the-Sound.

As undisputed queen of her court, she had chosen Julie for Goddess of Liberty; but Ella herself was all the goddesses she had ever heard of, as she was all the heroines she wrote about. In her fluttering chiffons she must have seemed to herself the first incarnation of Cleopatra. This was not Long Island Sound on a Fourth of July at the close of the nineteenth century, A. D. It was the ancient Nile; and there on the sands, her lover awaited her. What if her Antony was seen by the world in the guise of a silver merchant, tipping the scales not far from two hundred pounds?

To her eyes, to which the russet rocks off the Sound were pink, to her vision, before which all history and all personal experience were finally to be seen through yellow journalistic glasses, Robert was all the ancient heroes rolled into one. Among his contemporaries—for though he did not, like his wife, write for publication, he *was* a contemporary—whose lanuginous tufts made Rip Van Winkle seem by comparison simply unshaven, his face, with the sole ornament of twirled moustachios, must have appeared denuded, almost defenseless. And to modern eyes, unschooled in the tonsorial experiments of that period before Freud, when the saying went that to be kissed by a man without a moustache was like eating an egg without salt, Robert, from his photographs, gives the impression of a documentary desperado, corrected by the benign expression of his glance. But there he was, with his fine voice, and direct eyes, always solid behind Ella—more than her Antony.

Their child lived only a few hours; but did not the Sunday supplement beauty, Maurine, whose mother had read Ella Wheeler's "Maurine," come and smile to her, and was this not a child of their own, then, smiling? All the girls in the Maurine Club in Chicago were her children; and the thousands upon thousands who read in her poems, syndicated by Hearst, that "Love Rules Triumphant" and "Life Is Eternal." And those too, whom she took to that warm, heaving bosom, so graphically described in her "Poems of Passion" and comforted for the loss of their loved ones, for their gray hairs, for being out of a job, they too were her children. And the bereaved mothers she consoled during the first World War, they were her children too, those for whom she wrote in her New York *Journal* column that Death was the most loyal, the last, the best lover of all, the never-failing friend. Later, when she went to the Front herself, to France, obeying an astral message from Robert, who had "passed on to a larger and more wonderful plane"—were not the boys to whom she ministered and read her oft-quoted poems, her sons? Might not any one of them be her own son who had not lived to die for democracy?

Her own parents had been her children, when she took on, with the burden of her success, that of being a daughter twice over. From the beginning she had helped the family on that bleak Wisconsin farm, with the verse that flowed so easily, far too easily, from her exalted temperament. For Ella Wheeler Wilcox belonged to that buoyant race to whom Mark Twain would have reared his heathen statue to Energy; though she ended by saying that all the optimistic props she had given others failed her. But while the show lasted, she awakened each morning reborn.

No matter what happened the day before, there was always with the dawn—for she was a morning person—the renewed "undertone of rapture," there was always "the balm." Each summer she wrote her friends that this was the best summer of all. Like Mark Twain, and like Jack London, she lived in the moment, safely close to the surface. Her adolescent dreams, excepting for one thing—she was possessed of the same passion for fame and adulation that consumed Marie Bashkirtseff—her longings were entirely those of the average American girl; lovely dresses, travel, feminine accomplishments, summers by the sea, the compelling lover. And she wanted everybody else to have everything and to be happy and beautiful. In "Being Alive" she expostulated, with more truth than prose, that "in every thousand people who are living on this earth, not more than one is alive."

She herself was avid for life. Would she ever make up for those lonely nights on the farm, when she pinned her curtains against the moon's rays, crying: "Another beautiful night of youth wasted and lost"? She was not content with what Robert Frost and the Greeks call samples of life; she wanted big slices of it—with the loud pedal on. She wanted, like Hemingway's bullfighter hero, to live "all the way up." And she balked at the woman's role of waiting with clasped fingers for life to come; she ran eagerly toward it, as far as a woman can.

Hankering, like London, for "life" above art, she confused both mortally by separating them—as though the one did not flower from the other. She

*The Saturday Review presents a condensation from the opening section of Jenny Ballou's "Period Piece: the Life and Time of Ella Wheeler Wilcox," to be published January 30 by Houghton Mifflin.

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could easily have said with Jack London that "I have always stood for the exalting of the life that is in me over art, or any other extraneous thing." For with her, too, art was the extraneous thing. In her lonely childhood she had presentiments that "hosts of rare souls were approaching" and that "splendid banquets were in preparation for me." But when the routine of being successful palled, when she was no longer hungry at the banquets, and the time arrived to come to terms with herself, without excuses, the whole bric-a-brac would tumble. Both art and life would fail her. But until that day, when all her values went shipwreck, she always had her defences ready.

But while an interloper on the literary front, her letters and public apologies are a definite contribution to the literature of self-defence. American letters might be silent about her; American inarticulated life was full of her. Standing for something beneath and beyond the intellectual life of the country, a pure phenomenon of democracy, she considered herself, and was considered, a star in that sky where the barefoot girl makes good. And she took the role of Ella Wheeler Wilcox so seriously that she considered it a patriotic duty to appear always triumphant and joyous. In her autobiography she puts the joyousness on thick; but her pride in her humble origins, in which she always gloried, contributed to the effect of an imposing dignity. She never tried to hide her wide, soft plebeian feet from the aristocratic New England worshippers of success who surrounded her in Connecticut. For she knew she belonged to the rising aristocracy; and she was queen.

James Whitcomb Riley, with whom she had a correspondence, and a few meetings that ended disastrously, criticized her for her "frivolous appearance" and asked her how she thought "that god-woman Mrs. Browning would have looked in a fashionable gown and a bang." After which, having replied "that I thought she would have looked very much better than she did with the cork-screw curls prominent in the pictures," she stuck to her guns, and continued through the years to adorn herself in costumes of new color schemes each spring, as carefully planned with her dressmaker as a military campaign.

She might rival all; she would emulate none. And she fought like a tigress against the advice of any kind, whether it came from Riley, or Lucy Larcom, the gentle authoress of "Idyl of Work;" or from the woman who had warned her that "Poems of Passion" were "calculated to spoil all chance of a desirable marriage," and whom Ella, with uncharacteristic spite, called Madame de Staël of Milwaukee.

No, nobody could make a Mrs. Browning of her. She wanted, only, and above all, to be that god-woman Ella Wheeler Wilcox. And later, when she became noted, or, as a well-meaning but somewhat unlettered neighbor in Short Beach put it, notorious, she was herself an announcement of Ella Wheeler Wilcox wherever she went, a magnetic annotation of her photographs and illustrated verses in the New York *Journal*.

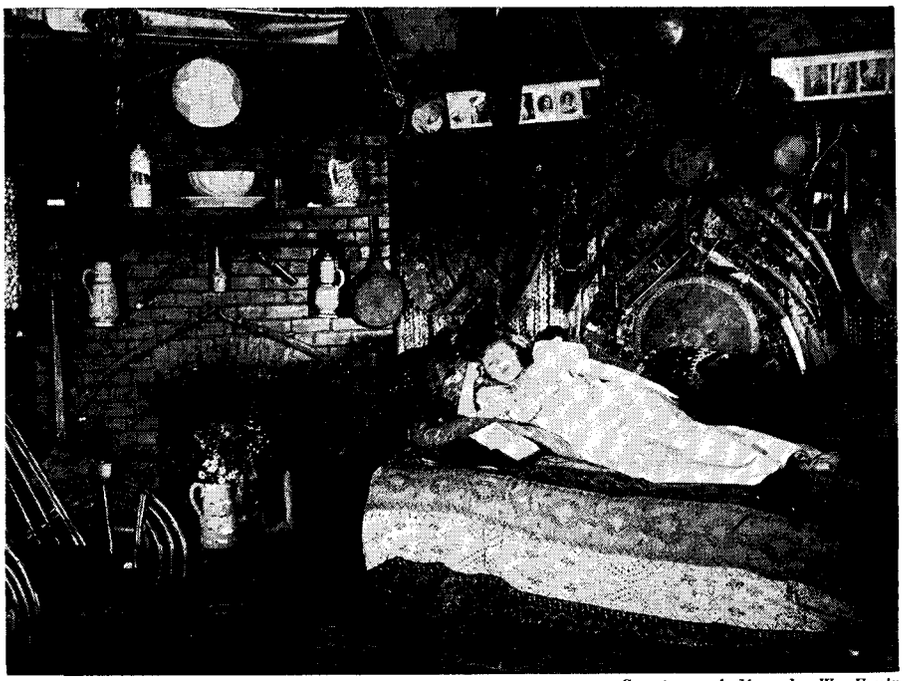
Henry James may have found our continent "unentertaining." For Ella Wheeler Wilcox it was a continual pageant, to be celebrated with all the fireworks. She did not have to wait until Illumination Night in Short Beach to celebrate love, life, and democracy. There was something of the Fourth-of-July spirit even in her "Sonnets of Abelard and Heloise"; and when, in France, she made the pilgrimage to Argenteuil (that "battlefield of love"), to worship at the shrine of those poets of passion of the twelfth century, it was with a reverence with which she would have gone to Bunker Hill or Gettysburg.

She had a genius for worship; love was her specialty; heart came before art. But she only gave evidence against herself when she confronted her critics with those "sonnets" (which, she wrote a critic, who had been particularly cruel, "are regarded my most ambitious work in a literary way"). As to her prose description of Abelard and Heloise, in which she proves "how much greater is a lover than a philosopher," it is a masterpiece of its kind. The classic characters to whom she alludes with great abandon have a misplaced air; just as her more extended studies in spiritualistic phenomena somehow lack substantiality. (She translated a part of Leon Denis's "The Problem of Life and Destiny," encouraged by an astral message from Robert during the World War.) But just as her worst novels were her best, so was she at her most inimitable when she was most maudlin.

In a language easily accessible to the weary and semi-literate, she told her readers, hungry for easily swallowed half-truths, that it was unhappiness, and not happiness, that was the exception. She warned them, knowing too well their anonymous hopelessness, that the suicide was "a spiritual pauper." She goaded them to the Broader Life, in huge capitals: "We must climb, stumble, fall and try again and again." They were all as she had once been, and any of them might become as she was, an Ella Wheeler Wilcox. "No force of circumstances can keep you down if you are strong enough to rise up."

The subway-riders might not, after a grinding day of work, be strong enough to rise up. But what if the work was enervating, distasteful? Keep at it: "until you feel yourself bettered and strengthened by it . . . Unless you are learning self-control and patience and cheerfulness you have not become large enough for a larger occupation." No less than Emerson, she was telling them to hitch their wagons to a star.

And it was not enough that she encouraged these thousand invisible ones. In her own life, though there might be a few who left her with a vague feeling of insult upon being hailed too enthusiastically as genius, there were many who carried away an energizing ray that did not leave them all their



Courtesy of Mrs. L. W. Ervin

"Reclining on her Oriental couch, surrounded by trophies from the long travels she and Robert took during the winters"...

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lives. They had seen a masterpiece of heart. For with her heart was art. If a neighbor apologized for interrupting her in her work, she would not listen, crying that what, after all, is there in the world, more important than people?

And this was too true. There was nothing more important than people for her. She won the wide world over; and in Short Beach it was said that the sun rose and set with Ella Wheeler. Here she walked in and out of neighbors' houses without knocking, looking for her Angora cats (she had preferred cats to dolls when she was little, and feeling she had been a cat in some other incarnation, said she would not even care to go to heaven if there were no cats there). She gave the young girls books on the Facts of Life, and the little boys dishes of ice cream they remembered with the greatest tenderness when they grew up. On the trolley to New Haven she would dash up to a startled and embarrassed young mother, and read phrenologically her baby's future, to the entertainment of the passengers who knew by the action, though they might not yet have seen her, that this was certainly Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

She was able to practise, sure of an appreciative community, her Little Efforts at Brotherhood; and to give full sway to civic raptures by organizing the Short Beach White Wings, although this was speedily abandoned when it appeared to have a feminist tinge. For Ella Wheeler was not among those women who winged their way, flat-heeled, into a man's world. She wore very high heels; and though temperamentally so different from Lucy Larcom, her idea was not essentially unlike the New Englander's who "always regarded it as a better ambition to be a true woman than to become a successful writer." In fact, Ella's attitude on the burning woman question of the day was quite on a par with her Sunday-school solution of economic problems by being kind to beggars and peddlers, and training her servants never to turn them away, until the trolley built from New Haven made this continual reminder of life on the other side of the tracks not so easy to handle, after Ella's kindness was broadcast.

Ella in 1894

The famous author, philosopher, and gentlewoman, as Ella Wheeler Wilcox was called, gave costume balls and Sunday afternoon musicales and pageants that turned into regional festivities. Eva Gautier sang her Javanese songs for Ella's guests; Ruth St. Denis (whom Ella considered "lovelier and greater in character even than as an artist") danced for them. Ella, reclining on her Oriental couch—a hangover from the wistful Omar Khayyam craze—surrounded by trophies from the long travels she and Robert took during the winters, would remember the carved papercutter he had given her in Wisconsin, and that had roused half-visions of these high moments, which now shaped themselves before her very eyes.

She won the wide world over, and lost, so to speak, her own soul. The world had been too much with her; the impulse had been lost in the speech that went with the saying; feeling had too often drowned the phrase. For much as she would have liked to believe that heart came before art, she learned too well, when the summing-up came, that heart had been an excuse for her art.

Yet even at her most blatant, it can be said for her that she ended by fooling herself almost as much as she helped fool the public. Scarcely possessing Brisbane's quotation-book knowledge, she did not write down; and in place of his high counterfeit thinking we have, in her, the direct expression, however crude, of a genuine democratic experience in which thousands basked. Close to her readers, she knew—she had lived—their lives. There was not a mood that passed over the country which she did not reach, reflect, and express. One of our first syndicated advisers, she wrote on love, morals, labor, and manners.

She warned girls not to telephone their lovers; she reproved the elderly for sighing for bygone days, advising them to "Keep Love and Sympathy and Faith alone in your Soul and you can Defeat Time." She preached that "morals is something quite apart from chastity" and she gave the Victorian ladies, who complained about the Oneida Community in Short Beach, a pleasant shudder, by declaring in "The Creed" that

> Whoever was begotten of pure love
> And came desired and welcome into life,
> Is of immaculate conception.

Always generous, she consoled the ungraceful that Beauty was not All; she told the poor that money carried its own poison; and she warned the sanctimonious that

> Sometimes it takes the acid of a sin
> To cleanse the clouded windows of our souls.

Intensely religious by temperament, she subscribed to no fixed religion. (She wrote her brother Marcus: "In my tour of the world I went into every temple of the different countries and worshipped according to their methods. In that way I get all the vibrations of faith and reverence to add to my own.")

Her own mentality curiously characteristic of her day, it was as though her own life had been the autobiography of America. And when Robert died she was no more reluctant to share her astral experiences with those who were also suffering during the World War from the same loss, than she had been to share her earthly ones. And she spoke to her followers of her spiritualistic excursions, as she had of everything else she had ever lived.

She believed herself divinely inspired; and she could have said with Emerson: "I am surrounded by messengers of God who send me credentials day by day," fully as well as she could have claimed kinship legitimately with "that Somebody" who helped John Philip Sousa compose his patriotic marches. And anonymous America listened, through her, to its own experiences; and heard in her, its own voice.

Awake and Sing

THE CREATIVE ADULT. By Hughes Mearns. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1940. 300 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

LET me say, first of all, that, in spite of the blurb on the jacket, Mr. Mearns will not and does not pretend to make a Shakespeare or a Rembrandt out of you in six easy lessons. An authority on progressive education, he recounts, in "The Creative Adult" how, in his belief, the general methods of that education may be applied to adults as well as to children, with the goals of self-expression and a richer individuality in view. It is his contention that even a good many adults, poor things, have a certain amount of dormant creative ability and that, by the proper means, that dormant creativeness may be awakened. But, unlike many theorists, he has consistently put his beliefs to the test of practice, and this book is an honest, if enthusiastic, account of what he has found.

We talk in shibboleths instead of saying what we mean. We pretend to admire what really bores us. We pass by things we really admire because teacher hasn't triple-starred them. In other words, we follow the crowd. Mr. Mearns is against the crowd and routine-spirit. He believes, despite his many years of teaching, that we really can think, and think with independence, if we try. He states his case as

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Newspictures

Hughes Mearns

follows. "We had two methods of approach in this adventure in adult, creative education: one directed to the world within the adult subject, an exploration—really a relentless and shameless self-analysis—of the inhibitions and prohibitions that stop us from developing individual judgment; the other, directed to the world of our creative contemporaries, an exploration also, but this time in the cultivation of individual taste. The perfecting of individual judgment and individual taste is the ultimate aim of the teaching of individuality. The outcome should be the flowering of individual artistry."

In support of his belief he gives case-histories, examples, and samples of work done by previously "uncreative" adults. It's an interesting, often a fascinating, study. It would prove more to me if just one of the samples of verse submitted were even approximately first-rate. That does not mean so much to Mr. Mearns—and, from one point of view, he is right. He is interested in the release of individuality rather than perfection of form. Yet there is such a thing as good workmanship—and emotion and self-expression will not do it alone. There is such a thing as the arduous, intense, and incessant self-discipline of art. I don't think you'd gather it existed, from Mr. Mearns's pages.

Nevertheless, this is a stimulating book. It is optimistic, frequently dogmatic, as biassed, at times, on its own side as the formal educationists were on theirs. It has "you, too" touches in it that I don't like at all. It has many extremely penetrating remarks, on the teacher as well as the taught, on children as well as adults. It won't make you over. It may make you think at least one actual thought. That is what a good teacher does, even on the printed page.

Poetry that Affirms

ORIGINAL POEMS TOGETHER WITH TRANSLATIONS FROM THE SANSKRIT. By Arthur William Ryder. With an Introduction by George Rapall Noyes. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1939. 186 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

THE reviewer is perhaps disqualified as an impartial critic of this wholly remarkable book by twenty-eight years of delightful association with the wholly remarkable man who wrote it. I praised him briefly in the columns of this periodical at the time of his death in 1938. And I have done so elsewhere. But it becomes me to do so again now that Professor Noyes has so ably edited Ryder's briefer translations and his original poetry.

There is lamentably little of the latter, a mere thirty pages; but they will serve, however negligent Ryder was of the theory and practice of those "who for the moment are called moderns." Not for him cloudy ventures into the atmospheric and elliptical. His is the poetry that states and affirms, where every word is in its right place and every word has strict significance. Ryder was a burning thinker concerning whatever enlisted his interest, particularly religion. And his verse, always the perfect chariot of his notable thought, rushed to the goal *fervidis rotis*. The stuff is a noble admixture of fiery penetration and mirthful sagacity. And the man must be dull to the point of oddity, who is not tickled and touched by the play of fancy that darts between the poles of the Gilbertian and the Emersonian. That may be fairly said of "Tolstoi—a Critical Symposium" in which a clergyman considers the

> Conventions dear to mine and me,
> From testing which we shrink;
> Ah, where would true religion be
> If every one should think?

And an Olympian, who winds up the discussion, has this contribution to make among others:

> Yet worse the little ones are sure
> To organize his truth—
> Some school or church that shall endure
> In everlasting youth.
>
> And thus they always kill at length
> The thing they organize;
> The more the body gathers strength
> The more the spirit dies.
>
> They of the Inquisition prayed
> To him of Galilee!
> The Renaissance of learning made
> A university!

And there are half a dozen poems statelier in their motion, and enormously expressive of what has always seemed to me a noble conception of life, uncontaminated by factitious seriousness. Ryder had a contempt for professional solemnity, though no man could be more seriously interested in the important and more downright in his dealing with what pretended to be. In his own words he knew what "preserves an unbribed soul," and no one understood better the dangers of safety, or set a higher value on

> Some hate of what is prudent, thrifty, mean,
> Some love for what is grim.

It is curious that, proceeding in his own way from a wholly different direction, he should have arrived at an eminence whence his view of the landscape had points in common with what Housman saw. Each of them had swallowed and digested an elephantine subject. Each remained unimpressed by his own prowess, and each was hopelessly well informed on matters outside his own field. And the commentary of each on what he beheld was terse, penetrating, and frequently disconcerting to those who are apt to take everything for corn. Housman I am sure would have heartily concurred with the sentiment of Kalidasa's epigram which it was characteristic of Ryder to translate:

LITERARY CRITICISM

> Established fame is not enough;
> Not all the new is wretched stuff.
> The wise approve whate'er they may;
> The fools repeat what critics say.

I believe that Ryder's original poems have the root of the matter in them. There is no doubt whatever that his translations have, or that in them Ryder attained the height of perfection in a difficult art. No one would know they were translations at all, without being so informed. The thought of two or three thousand years ago and ten thousand miles away comes to us as simply and directly as from a friend's lips today.

> I saw some great, wild elephants who
> Were gathered in a ring.
> They saw some men with a lassoo,
> And they began to sing:
>
> "We fear no fire nor goad nor sling,
> Nor any man that lives;
> We do not fear a single thing
> Except our relatives."

It is perhaps startling to discover that the sentiment is as old as the "Ramayana." It is even more so to find, at the very dawn of history and religion, verses of such tempered irony as these two stanzas from the "Rig-Veda."

Give wealth, O Faith, to me who give

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Such worship as I can.
Make me respected, make me live
A rich, religious man.

We call on Faith by morning's light,
On faith in glare of day,
On Faith, when evening sinks to night:
O Faith, give faith to pray.

A distinguished Orientalist, whom Professor Noyes has cited in his able and charming introduction, is of the opinion that Ryder is at his best when his original is epigrammatic and witty, rather than when it is serious and sustained. Setting aside the fact that, as far as an outsider can judge, what is called wit seems to have been endemic in Sanskrit poetry of whatever description, I cannot agree with him —not with the great hymn to Fortitude from the "Mahabharata," too splendid to quote except in its entirety, staring me in the face. I prefer the opinion of Professor Cherniss, also quoted by Professor Noyes, for whom these translations "are now monuments of English literature and at the same time the best commentaries on their originals." Ryder would have been startled by the noble compliment, and past all peradventure would have said something entirely apt and totally unexpected. But it by no means exaggerates the abilities of a great man who brought to his task the complete knowledge of a great subject, and a talent for poetry beyond that of many whom the world would not hesitate to call poets.

Leonard Bacon was formerly professor of English at the University of California. His latest book is an autobiography, "Semicentennial."

Plays for Radio

THE FOUR APES AND OTHER FABLES OF OUR DAY. By Alfred Kreymborg. New York: Loker Raley. 1939. 230 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

THESE ten radio-plays in verse were produced by NBC last winter. They are vivacious, tinkling, always competent, sometimes not without a certain depth. They do not, however, stand alone; for realization they must depend upon the timbre and idiosyncratic spell of the radio. One welcomes them, as one welcomed Archibald MacLeish's experiments in radio drama, for their promise of a new and important medium in development; but one cannot read them for themselves. The fables play down dreadfully to the audience; and their almost febrile straining for whimsy, which might be less apparent in actual performance, makes them uneasy closet-reading. But they are a new direction.

Instrument of the State

AGENT OF DEATH. By Robert G. Elliott and Albert R. Beatty. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1940. 315 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

WHEN Robert Elliott was a lad his family wanted him to study for the ministry. It was a disappointment to them when he chose instead to go into the then new business of electrical engineering. The latter gave him a good job as chief electrician of Dannemora Prison. He married and settled there, fixed for life—or would have been, but that the New York State Legislature passed a law making electricity the official means of putting condemned criminals to death. The official state executioner was required by the terms of his contract to train two assistants in the technique of the electric chair, and Elliott, who had often handled electrical matters for him, was chosen as one. This made no special impression on the lucky man. It was a matter of form, the execution of an agreement, under which Elliott's duty was the faintly unpleasant but possible one of inspecting connections and being a witness at electrocutions.

It remained so until one evening in 1903, when, a condemned man having been strapped in the chair, the old executioner stepped back and told Elliott to throw the switch. He did it without having time to think about it; and from that point moved on to become the public executioner of five several states. Here are his memoirs, always rather grisly, for they are largely concerned with the last moments of people who, whatever their past, approached those moments no more wishful to die than you or I. You hear them talking one minute through Elliott's own unaffected phrases (he, or Mr. Beatty, who wrote down what he said, is a very good reporter), and on the next page they are corpses whose only characteristics are anatomical. You consider with Elliott how to use voltages that will not burn badly; you are glad to know that though life in some cases is not altogether extinct, sensation has undoubtedly ceased.

It makes a curious book, of more than morbid interest. Perhaps the most curious feature is the revelation of Elliott himself, so sane an average a man that ordinary circumstances might have made him stodgy. Yet as the book progresses, there is evident a constant effort to prove that he is sane and normal; that the business of being an agent of death does not lie on his mind; that he can be at Sing Sing an automatic instrument of the State's will and in Queens Village a good grandfather who goes to work like any other man.

He protests a little too much, especially since the book closes with quite a fervid little plea for the abolition of capital punishment. He never laughs; the only joke in the book is one which he tells us was received in deadly silence. (A condemned murderer named Appell took his seat in the chair with the airy remark—"You're going to see a baked apple in about a minute.") Perhaps he is right about the capital punishment; certainly it is a new thing to have a book from a profession which has always been interesting, but always inarticulate.

Open Letter

(*Continued from page* 4)

P. who's playing in So-and-So, and dear Judge B. who has consented to open his adorable old house for the benefit of the Garden club—well, I felt quite sure you would enjoy meeting them quite—well, at least *almost* as much as they hope to meet you! All very informal, of course, lazy and comfortable as can be—and I can call—why, if you aren't ready before five forty-five, we can easily get here by six thirty, in time for dinner at least, if not cocktails—"

You paused. I swayed slightly, telephone in hand. *Of course* L. D. and E. P. have done splendid things and are charming people. You are all charming people. I know dear old Judge B. already, and love him. But he isn't my father, nor even my father's brother. I don't want to hurt or offend him, or anyone, but—we were going to take our supper in a basket and eat it by the swimming hole! When I did not answer, you said in a smaller, distinctly cooler, voice, "However, if that would be too inconvenient, of course I'll be up for you, as we planned, at seven-thirty."

I said, quickly, "No. No, if you'd really like to have me, of course I'll come with you for dinner. It isn't, naturally, that I shan't love it. I was only thinking—how I could arrange it. But I can. I see now I can. I'll be ready. And thank you so much."

I turned slowly back toward my desk, wondering what had been accomplished by all these gestures we had made, and had still to make? To whom was it really important that this dinner should be held and I attend it? Did you, perhaps, arrange it almost wholly for my pleasure? Had you told yourself that a dinner-party was very little, really, to show your

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appreciation of my coming? These are the questions which I wish might be answered, frankly, on both sides, so that time need not be lost, wasted, by all of us. Because—because, though I do thank you, with all my heart, for your good will, what I want most, when I go out to you, is to do the thing you truly need of me, to do it as soon as may be, and then to go back quickly, to my regular work and to my own normal life. If only you had asked me in the beginning, "Would you *like* to come to a dinner party at our house before, if I should arrange one? Or would you rather I should take you straight to the hall for the program? We want to do what you would honestly like best." Then I could have said, "You are wonderfully thoughtful. I should much rather go as directly as possible to the platform from an old campsite in the woods, from the pond and the ferns and the wild pear trees. That way I shall be most myself—if it is *I* you want."

I turned back to my desk, but you looked in at me through a narrow opening beside my front door—looked in with stark white, sharp-cornered faces. You were my mail.

You said you would like to have me come to you the last Thursday of any month next year, if my fee was small enough.

You told me you were reviewing my book next Friday afternoon and could find out no facts whatever concerning my life, details of which you were expected to describe.

You offered me honorary membership in a state women's organization which would meet two weeks from Saturday to bestow this honor at a luncheon where I should be called upon to speak for about half an hour.

You sent me your photograph.

You sent me snapshots which you took of my dog the day you called and did not find me at home.

You offered to sell me at an outrageous figure the land across the road from our place. You said this land was much in demand because of my proximity to it and would be sold almost immediately, if not to me then to someone else. I am afraid you *meant* me to infer that the people so eager to live near me are by no means desirable as anyone's neighbors.

You noted the mistakes in my books and asked me to account for them, if I could.

You also told me you liked what I wrote and wished me success in future. Bless you for that.

You did all these things not only once, but several times apiece.

And twelve times, in all, you said you were a high school student trying to write a theme—

I took you upstairs with me. I wrote as quickly as I could answers to the letters which, it seemed to me, cried out for immediate reply.

Then I drew my yellow paper toward me, like a child who has been sent to his room for interrupting matters which must be attended to before his turn. I called the child back, put my arm around him, said softly, "Now, we have a little while—"

We had a little while. It was ten-thirty then. We had until eleven-thirty. The household—maid, gardener, daughter, dog—was quiet and considerate. I had an hour.

Then you came again to my door.

You came, this time, in shorts and blue shirt, riding a bicycle. You were young and handsome, a recent graduate of a famous Southern college, full of bold confidence and easy social grace.

You said, smiling at the maid, "Is The Author in?"

She said, "She is busy now, sir. May I take a message?"

You said, "Oh, no. I have to see her. I'm touring New England. She's one of the sights, you know."

The maid said, "I'm sorry. But she doesn't come downstairs until one."

"All right," you said, "I'll wait. I'll sit on her doorstep until she comes out."

"That's a long time, sir."

"Yes, it is. And me a close friend of a close friend of her too, L. G. of Richmond! In fact, he told me to come here. Said she was a grand person. Said I mustn't miss her. And I'm not going to. So here I'll sit—"

"Well," the maid said, won by the smile, convinced by the easy use of a familiar name, "I think she'd want you to come in. It's cooler inside. And there are books in there."

"Fine," you said, entering like seven men, whistling, rocking my little house. "This is fine. Bring me a glass of water, will you? Yes, fine and cool inside. Hot as the devil pushing through this sand to get out here though."

About twelve o'clock I came down.

There you were. It was all true, no doubt, about you and my friend L. G., only that I very much doubt he really urged you to walk in unannounced. But it was true enough, and you were one of the charming people. You wanted to sing for me, to tell me stories of the adventures of your trip. You said you had found New Englanders everywhere so kind, so cordial, so outgoing, so hospitable that you, a Southerner, were going to write a journal of this bicycle tour for *The Atlantic Monthly*, to prove that Yankees had been maligned. Now, we have taken *The Atlantic Monthly* ever since I can remember. I do not know whether you will stop riding, talking, whistling, long enough to write your story. I rather doubt it. This letter may appear first on a printed page. But I do shudder at even the bare possibility of being read out, excommunicated, damned as the only remaining sample of the wrong kind of Yankee, especially on the pages of my *Atlantic Monthly*. And so—what did I do? I asked you, at long last, at one o'clock, if you would stay for lunch.

And what did you do?

Why, you said you would. And you did.

At two o'clock my little girl began shedding tears in her room. Perhaps she intended I should hear her. Perhaps not. In either case, I heard her. I hurried us all from the table. I began saying goodbye to you. At two-thirty I stopped saying it, and went away. You were still here. You said you would wait for sundown in my garden, and I suppose you did.

Judy and I went away at three. The grandparents thought us very late. They try to be patient but they cannot understand why so often I disappoint them nowadays. They cannot help feeling that their pleasure means less to me than that of many others.

We could not go to the old camp site that day, only to the end of the road. There was no time to walk through the woods. I had to be back at five. Even then I had to dress hurriedly to be ready for you at five-thirty.

Then I rode with you, I dined with you, I talked to you and answered your questions, I hope to your satisfaction, to your pleasure and profit, and, humanly, I also hope, to mine.

But it was midnight when I reached home yesterday.

It was to my family almost as if I had not lived that day.

And I had written just two hundred words.

In a good day—a long, quiet day—I can write two or three thousand words.

Twice three thousand of the right words, properly put together, makes a short story.

Forty times three thousand words makes a novel; perhaps a best-seller; even, perhaps, a better book than the one you liked best of all last year's crop. Perhaps not. But perhaps so.

And I am writing now to ask, dear Banker, Rotarian, Librarian, Teacher, Parent, Pupil, Church Group, Club Member anywhere, is it worth it? Even only on the *chance* that this is what you take when you take my days, is it worth it?

With true gratitude and deep affection always,

Most sincerely,

YOUR FAVORITE WRITER.

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Rimbaud in Two Translations

A SEASON IN HELL. Translated with an Introduction by Delmore Schwartz. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 1939. 99 *pp.* $2.50.

SOME POEMS BY RIMBAUD. Translated with an Introduction by Lionel Abel. New York: Exiles Press. 1939. 50 *cents.*

Reviewed by PAUL ROSENFELD

TO readers of his version of "A Season in Hell," Delmore Schwartz comments upon the J. Sibley Watson translation of this heroic prose-poem of Rimbaud's in *The Dial* in 1920. "It contained serious errors," he asserts. He also condemns most renditions of Rimbaud's verses. They "have been poor to the extreme of what is either ignorance or the ignorant unwillingness to distinguish between translation and continuous paraphrase." Mr. Schwartz is living in a glass house and throwing stones. His own "strict" version of the "Season" and the seven poems included in it is anything but free from "serious errors," and in instances grossly paraphrastic.

It renders, for example, "Loin des oiseaux, des troupeaux, des villageoises" as "Far from birds, from *trumpets,* from village girls." "Je ne me souviens pas plus loin que cette terre-ci" becomes "I remember myself before this country"; "Familles—qui tiennent tout de la déclaration des Droits de l'Homme," "Families—which *utterly adhere* to the Declaration of the Rights of Man." In several spots, the translation omits essential sentences and phrases. And "les plaines souabes" is diluted into "desert plains"; and "Parasites de la propreté—des nos femmes, aujourd'hui qu'elles sont si peu d'accord avec nous," converted into "Parasites of the propriety—of our women, so that to-day such things are so disagreeable to us." Etc., etc.

Nor does its style quite recapture the male violence, the sarcasm, and inordinate excitement with which Rimbaud conveyed the torments of his young soul. What distinction the translation possesses flows mainly from its consistent rhythmicality and the thoughtfulness of Schwartz's Introduction. The format of the slender volume, too, is graceful.

Lionel Abel's humble volume of versions of certain of Rimbaud's First Verses, "Les Illuminations," and little poems in prose, meanwhile has its superiorities. Its translations, to be sure, are loose; at times, in "The Poet at Seven Years," to the point of unfaithfulness. Abel of course has had to struggle with Rimbaud's poetic forms as well as wonderfully precise vocabulary, yet he must be credited with poetic versions of the famous sonnet of the vowels and "The Poor in Church," "My Bohême," above all the miraculous "Drunken Boat." Possibly he has turned the last masterpiece into Hart Crane. Still he has recaptured in English verse the ecstatic sensuality of the heathen unconscious that burst forth in all its splendor in the poem. And his brilliant Introduction is quite the equal of that of Schwartz.

Everglade State

FLORIDA. Compiled by the WPA Florida Writers' Project. New York: Oxford University Press. 1939. 600 *pp., with index.* $2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PRATT

ONLY such a set-up as a WPA Writers' Project could compile so thoroughgoing a treatise on an entire state as is this latest addition to the American Guide Series. The added achievement of being not only exhaustive, but largely interesting, fresh, authoritative, and at moments even entertaining, is unique for a guidebook.

The volume, divided into three main sections, treats first of Florida's background in a series of seventeen brief but succinct articles. Everything from archeology and history to folklore and the surprising fact that Florida has a respectable body of art, is offered. These are told in a straightforward, extremely readable style whose consistency can probably be laid at the door of Dr. Carita Doggett Corse, State Director of the Florida Writers' Project. The account in the chapter, "Contemporary Scene," of the development of a casual Florida tourist into a boosting permanent resident is not in the Chamber of Commerce manner, but one of humor bordering upon the satirical.

The second part deals with the twelve principal cities of the state and errs only in listing the Palm Beaches as Palm Beach alone, whereas West Palm Beach has become one of the most important Florida communities. The third section is devoted to twenty-two tours of the state, with various sub-tours which leave out no important point of interest and do not stop at simply listing them but frequently give a telling delineation.

The greatest fault of the guide is a certain repetitiousness and overlapping of information, owing to the general manner of treatment, which deals with certain subjects twice and three times. This is more than made up for by its candid treatment of numerous subjects often soft-pedaled, such as the statistics about people killed during hurricanes, which are given honestly. Even a few of the excellent photographs are realistic rather than merely attractive scenes.

There are included a calendar of annual events, an historical chronology, and a pocket map whose usefulness is marred by a difficulty in handling. The book as a whole, however, is a definitive piece of work about Florida and a stunning *raison d'être* for such things as Writers' Projects.

"Frontier of Liberty"

THE STORY OF MODERN FRANCE, 1610-1914: Frontier of Liberty. By John G. Coulter. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1939. 458 *pp., with index.* $4.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

MR. COULTER, a Hoosier who has lived in France, wrote ten years ago a book called "Old France" to help his fellow-Americans appreciate the cathedrals and castles among which they traveled so ignorantly and unappreciatively. He now tells in a similar vein the story of modern France from Richelieu to the World War of 1914. (Shall we now be obliged to imitate the Russians, and distinguish that war as the Four Years' War?) Mr. Coulter is disarmingly frank about his purpose in this book. It is, he writes, meant for those who do not know any French history. It makes no pretence to adding to our knowledge, no pretence to be the work of a professional historian. It is based on French textbooks used in secondary education, the work of professional teachers in the employ of the Third Republic.

It is not a mere translation of these textbooks. Mr. Coulter apparently does not feel that his American readers would be held by the sober simplicity of style of his originals, and he has deliberately sought to be chatty and informal, to entertain as well as to enlighten. His chief device is the epithet, which he uses in a kind of Hoosier adaptation of the methods of Mr. Henry Luce's bright young men on *Time* and *Life*. "Heavy Marie" is "eased out of a high window in the chateau of Blois"; Bossuet's rivalry with Fénelon becomes a dispute between the "Eagle of Meaux" and the "Swan of Cambrai"; the third Napoleon is "this dopey, glass-eyed Bonaparte." Such homeliness has its dangers. Even the audience Mr. Coulter is aiming at will smile the wrong way at remarks like "the birth of Louis XIV in 1638 was the result of duty done rather than of love fulfilled." But with all its excessive chattiness, the book does give a good bird's-eye view of three centuries of French history. And, amateur though he insists he is, Mr. Coulter follows the latest style among academic historians, and brings in all the cultural, social, and economic history the most ardent disciple of the "new history" could desire. Unfortunately, he succeeds no better than the professors in knitting this material into a firm narrative. He hardly tries, but stops every so often to introduce lists of names of writers, painters, scientists, and inventors, all properly supplied with epithets.

Yet Mr. Coulter does manage to tie his book together, and to leave his reader with a very definite impression of a point of view. Mr. Coulter is a lover of France, *"mère des arts, des armes, et des lois."* Even those for

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whom the history of France is an old story will find this book an interesting document in the study of the influence of France on good cultured Americans. In spite of all her shortcomings, the France of Richelieu, Louis XIV, Napoleon, and Poincaré is for Mr. Coulter the "frontier of liberty," a nation which has with its life-blood defended a good—*the* good—way of life, which in our frontier isolation we have not had to defend.

"Tragic Genius"

PERILOUS BALANCE: The Tragic Genius of Swift, Johnson & Sterne. By W. B. C. Watkins. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1939. 172 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

W. B. C. WATKINS here turns over interesting materials but reaches few new or significant conclusions. The volume consists of five essays, with the greater emphasis upon Johnson and Sterne. The author's aim is twofold. He wishes to show, in the first place, how certain destructive forces—"disease, melancholia, tragedy" — constantly threatened the poise of Swift, Johnson, and Sterne. He studies reactions. He shows Swift writing satire, bagatelle, and obscenity; Johnson fighting idleness and fearing hell; Sterne chaffing gaily but self-consciously with death while his life-blood ebbs away.

Mr. Watkins is plausible and sometimes original in his comments on the personalities of his subjects, but he is not so successful in attaining his secondary (but more important) objective, which is to show how "the development of their genius" was "affected profoundly" by the same destructive forces. The trouble lies partly in the nature of the problem. It is easy to find evidence; the trick is to establish causation. But there is the added difficulty that except in the chapter on Sterne Mr. Watkins does not seem to have done enough hard, straight thinking. His writing, though orderly, lacks organic development. He tumbles out quotation after quotation (often four or five to a page) but fails to draw vital conclusions from them. Perhaps he is wise in refusing to strap himself to a thesis, but he is negligent in failing to define terms. He writes in a gloved style which often conceals faulty thought-formation.

As it happens, most of the author's weaknesses very largely disappear in the chapter on Sterne, by far the best in the book. Here Mr. Watkins indulges in a minimum of quotation-mongering, and he shows fairly convincingly that Sterne's way of living had a direct effect on his way of writing. He also discusses fruitfully the relationship of Sterne to the modern psychological novel. This chapter is so competently written that one looks forward to the biography of Sterne which Mr. Watkins is now preparing.

Art in Mexico

MEXICAN POPULAR ARTS. By Frances Toor. New York: Crown Publishers. 1939. 107 *pp.* $3.

MODERN MEXICAN ART. By Lawrence E. Schmeckebier. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1939. 190 *pp., with index.* $7.50.

ART FROM THE MAYANS TO DISNEY. By Jean Charlot. New York: Sheed & Ward. 1939. 280 *pp., with index.* $2.

Reviewed by OLIVER LARKIN

FRANCES TOOR founded *Mexican Folkways* and has written several guide-books to the language, the motor roads, the frescoes of Mexico. Her present volume is animated by something more than a desire to make Mexican travel easier for tourists, although the chapters on weaving, pottery, glass, metal, leather, carving, and even on toys, fireworks, and cookery will make for more intelligent shopping by the foreigner. Miss Toor realizes that the rush of the Indian artist-craftsman to fill tourist demands for small and inexpensive objects, and the petty profiteering of dealers and middlemen at the expense of the craftsman himself, impoverish both the artist and the artistic quality of what he produces; and this effect she attempts to counteract by increasing our respect for the ideas and traditions that go into the baskets, the pots, the blankets of the Mexican Indian, and by urging that for artistic, human, and practical reasons, the mass production of "mechanized handmade objects," into which the Indian can put only a part of his skill and his enthusiasm, be discouraged.

Mr. Schmeckebier, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at the University

HERS WAS THE HEART AND BRAIN OF A SPARKLING, SEETHING AGE

Voltaire, Walpole, Hervey, Chesterfield, and Pope gave their brilliance to the Augustan Age. A simple German princess, whom fate had made England's Queen, shaped their wit, their power, their intrigues to her own ends. She guided the King's hand, subdued his ministers, made great men her satellites. English life was, for the last time, the life of the Court—and her Court was the last one really to rule England.

Peter Quennell's acute and scintillating biography of George II's Queen is, as well, the portrait of a whole galaxy of the 18th Century's great, the history of a stirring age, the critique and the estimate of a fabulous period of cultural flowering.

PETER QUENNELL'S LIFE OF A QUEEN WHO MADE AN ERA

Caroline OF ENGLAND

The Viking Press

Illustrated. $3.75

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of Minnesota, has written a clear, objective, and complete account of modern Mexican art. His sobriety is a welcome corrective to the more partisan and more literary work of previous authors. Relying on the interviews he has held with the artists themselves, and upon first-hand study of the works of art, Dr. Schmeckebier reveals that the collective mural movement did not spring full-blown from Orozco, Siquieros, Rivera, and their Syndicate, but that the national revival of art by the pre-revolutionary Centro Artistico preceded by a decade the "renaissance" of the nineteen-twenties. This is only one of many contributions which this handsome and richly illustrated book offers toward placing the work of Rivera and his colleagues in true perspective. Although more than half the text is given to an exhaustive analysis of Orozco and Rivera, the final chapters discuss Castellanos, Tamayo, Zalce, Lazo, and others whose work is more recent, and thus admirably complete the record of Mexican art down to the present.

The work of Jean Charlot as a member of the famous Syndicate is described by Dr. Schmeckebier. More highly personal, more sprightly, and upon occasion more searching are Charlot's own comments on "Art from the Mayans to Disney." Over a third of his book deals with Mexico—the mural in the Temple of the Tigers at Chicken-Itza, Indian dances, Pulqueria paintings, the caricatures of Posada, the mind and art of Orozco. The artist-critic then reveals his cosmopolitanism by brief essays on Matisse, Eilshemius, Watkins, Shahn, the Cubists, and Surrealism. Charlot's witty volume concludes with two chapters on Walt Disney, the importance of whose art he weighs in his last paragraph:

> Truly an art-for-all, these great murals that move are pets of the people. Uccello's gigantic horseman has become green mold on its smoked wall; ancient frescoes are entombed in deserted museums. It is altogether fitting that new murals should emerge in those places where the living congregate.

Křenek Spielt Auf

MUSIC HERE AND NOW. By Ernst Křenek. Translated by Barthold Fles. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1939. 306 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by Irving Kolodin

As well as possessing a dubious reputation as the well-remembered composer of "Jonny Spielt Auf," Ernst Křenek has striven to make a place for himself in the musical world variously as pianist, critic, and conductor. To these activities may be added the authorship of the present volume, which seeks to relate the writing of music at the present time to the social situation of the composer, his place in the economic scheme by which music is produced, and the attitude of his listeners.

One has the curious feeling, when the last page has been turned, of not knowing whether Křenek has written this book to examine a situation for his readers, or to clarify his own approach to the problem of being a composer in the contemporary musical milieu. Part of this may be attributed to the mixture of intellectual sophistication and emotional naiveté which underlie the writing, and part to one's own knowledge that Křenek has himself pursued a somewhat various course as a composer. There was first a period of objectivity, then a floundering in the morass of pseudo-jazz (of which his famous opera is the generic example) and then, more recently, an enthusiasm for the twelve-tone system of Arnold Schoenberg.

This is not as remote from a consideration of the present volume as it may seem, for this problem of orientation, of establishing a style and an attitude, is a fundamental one in the works of many of the men whom Křenek discusses. His statement of it is obscured by a tedious method of writing (a mixture of Teutonic complexity with a striving for the turn of phrase which will attract American readers), but there is much that is pertinent, clearly observed, and effectively stated in this book. It will require not only persistence but a contributory effort on the part of the reader. However, those who discipline themselves to the task will find much that is provocative.

There are several indications that Mr. Křenek's acquaintance with contemporary music is hardly as inclusive as the scope of the book would suggest. His statement that "Russia's contribution to new music has been nil for years" must be puzzling to those who have been interested by the works of Shostakovitch, and there is scarcely any attention to such conspicuous figures on the contemporary scene as William Walton, Carlos Chavez, Hector Villa-Lobos, or, for that matter, of Serge Prokofieff. At another extreme of perception, one can only award a raised eyebrow to the characterization of Johann Strauss's "The Bat" and "The Gypsy Baron" as "saltless stupidity." It is hardly likely that Strauss himself regarded them as more than a framework for his musical inventions, as Mozart did "The Magic Flute," or for that matter, Wagner did "Parsifal."

Sixty-Dollar Island

IN PRIVATEER'S BAY. By Robb White. New York: Harper & Bros. 1939. 295 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by Raymond Holden

WHETHER the human desire to escape from all responsibility for the world should receive approbation or censure, it would be difficult to look down your nose at Robb and Rodie White. These two young people, he a graduate of Annapolis who felt that he was not a Navy man but an artist and so resigned his commission, thereby getting two strikes on him from the start, and she a young Georgian of what is described as "breath-taking" beauty, got married, and went with practically no capital to an island in the Virgin group not so much to go native as to write. They had been told that that island was practically a paradise. It was not. It was full of run-out natives, flourishing sand-flies, and a generally disorderly desolation. It got Robb and Rodie down so they scouted for another island and, strange to say, found it at the same time that Robb sold some of his writings. They bought the island for sixty dollars and promptly built themselves a house of concrete, working like day laborers and enduring hurricanes and mosquitoes as they worked. Their story, well told in a sort of vicarious third person, is just what all escapists dream of. These two emerge from it as warm-hearted, happy, living beings. Even those readers who believe that there is something reprehensible in not facing the world as the human race has, for better or worse, made it, will find it hard not to envy the Whites.

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The New Books

Art

THE WAY OF WESTERN ART 1776-1914. By Edgar Preston Richardson. Harvard University Press. 1939. 204 *pp.* $4.

On the assumption, a very doubtful one, that our civilization is no less unified than that of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, Mr. Richardson has undertaken a synthesis bringing the art of Western Europe and the United States into correlation with social and political activities. What is attempted is an extension of the environmentalism of Taine to the modern field. These sweeping generalizations, when valid, are the very crown of criticism, and even when imperfect are stimulating.

Mr. Richardson has brought to his task wide discursive knowledge and a catholic taste. For a critic of his age to take Trumbull and La Farge seriously and to think Worthington Whittredge and Homer D. Martin worth mentioning is ingratiating and reassuring. Indeed, the merit of this book lies mostly in such brief incidental appreciations and in abundance of well-chosen illustrations.

On the broader issue of the coherence and worth of the generalizations not much can be said except that Mr. Richardson, like many a generalizing predecessor, has failed very gallantly. His oversimplified categories produce bizarre definitions and collocations, and the syncopations necessary in such a book have produced some errors and many ambiguities. An unwary reader is likely to think that Doré and Darley were wood-engravers. It would amaze Whittredge to learn that his art went off from the employment of "divided color." There is a bad mixup of captions under 167. These venial but characteristic slips are noted only to suggest the considerable revision that should be made in the event of second edition.

More serious is the failure to see that many tendencies of recent and modern art rise and fall within the field of art itself, and are quite without relation to things in general. A reading and digestion of the late Willard Huntington Wright's "Modern Art", would have made this clear. The reader who does not insist on being enlightened will find pleasure in this book, which, if dialectically unsatisfactory, has its felicities in details.

F. J. M., Jr.

Fiction

MRS. TIM OF THE REGIMENT. By D. E. Stevenson. Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 378 *pp.* $2.50.

Miss Stevenson will in all probability go on being "the author of the Miss Buncle Books" no matter how many other entertaining novels she writes. The present one is a further demonstration of her ability to satisfy readers who want to be amused without having their intelligence insulted.

Timothy Christie is an officer in a Scots regiment; his wife's journal, kept under lock and key, makes up "Mrs. Tim of the Regiment". Mrs. Tim is a highly impulsive woman, precipitating action wherever she appears, and she can see a joke at her own expense as clearly as at others'. The helter-skelter life in a house with two highly individualized children, with aunts and other visitors dropping in with the maximum of unexpectedness, gives Mrs. Tim plenty of material for her day-book. No actual plot develops aside from the proper outcomes of a love affair that threatens to go wrong for a time, but action is rampant throughout.

"Mrs. Tim of the Regiment" reminds one pleasantly of the Provincial Lady, although it has less of the tart astringency that marks Mrs. Delafield's work. And it has to be admitted that in the last section Miss Stevenson goes unjustifiably romantic on us by letting two men become enamored of Mrs. Tim, which causes the diary to become all too coy for a time. Mrs. Tim is at her best when busy about the daily terrors of home and neighborhood life.

G. G.

THE DUST WITHIN THE ROCK. By Frank Waters. Liveright. 1940. 534 *pp.* $2.50.

To the 500 pages which he has already written about the family of old man Rogier, living at the foot of Pike's Peak, Frank Waters has now added 500 more in similar vein. The two novels, "Below Grass Roots" and "The Dust Within the Rock," report in copious detail upon the fervors, yearnings, and resentments of these people, each one of whom is an artist *manqué*. To punctuate the emotional crises of the present book, Mr. Waters makes the dramatic most of the recurring epileptic attacks of old man Rogier.

Interest, however, is concentrated upon the character of the grandson, March Cable. The decay which has overtaken his once aristocratic family has, for the boy, an especially bitter taste, because he realizes that Indian blood, inherited from his father, has made him an alien within this group bound intimately and painfully together by poverty. The book becomes therefore his odyssey in search of integration.

The pattern of the narrative is familiar. Fiction has given us many times before each detail of the boy's demoralizing humiliations, his gropings toward expression and toward love. The setting, in a resort town left as a souvenir of its exuberance by the rushing tide of mining enterprise, introduces certain novel features. There are occasional episodes of spectacular originality. And always the character of the grandfather lends a kind of hectic vitality to the family scenes.

But the mannered artificiality of the writing constantly jostles the reader out of the sympathy that he would like to maintain. Mr. Waters has succumbed to the seduction of the adjective and he believes that the uses of prose poetry are best served by dumping three or four of them into a single line. He is also youthfully in love with obscure polysyllabic words. Occasionally, he even dips into the forgotten literature of the silent screen sub-title to offer a little gem like "Spring, the wanton hussy! who has not smelled the perfume of her passing."

One hopes that not many young writers are going to harden the hearts of reviewers against their sensibilities by crying: "Wolfe! Wolfe!" once too often.

J. G.

International

AMERICA FACES SOUTH. By T. R. Ybarra. Dodd, Mead. 1939. 321 *pp.* $3.

Thomas Ybarra has virtually reviewed "America Faces South" himself when he states, in a general disclaimer entitled "One Moment, Please," that some will say his "book

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about Latin America is just a hodgepodge!" Indeed, it is a hodgepodge of facts and impressions, which the author has packaged under such labels as Pattin' the Latin, Little but Lusty, Peaches and Patches, Slaps for the Japs, and So Endearing, Engineering (*sic*). Yet much of his book is undoubtedly what many people in the United States want to read about Latin America, perhaps because Mr. Ybarra, in his extensive travels through the twenty Republics south of the Rio Grande, has managed to see only the most pleasant sights and meet only the right people. With these he deals so charmingly that he might well have eliminated the somewhat dubious seasoning of economic and historical analysis.

Almost from the first page, Mr. Ybarra stresses the point that Latin America is not a homogeneous unit in a political, economic, or cultural sense. While not minimizing the difficulties attending the application of the Good Neighbor Policy, however, he is hopeful that the latter, together with the "foreboding aroused throughout Latin America by the surrender at Munich," will mean a gradual tightening of Western Hemispheric bonds. His treatment of inter-American political and economic relations is supplemented by a survey of totalitarian penetration—the hardy perennial of Latin American topics. Owing to the European war, Mr. Ybarra's material on German trade competition and other manifestations of Nazidom in Latin America had unfortunately lost much of its significance about two months before the book was published.

By this time it probably is clear that "America Faces South," written by a man long associated with Latin American affairs, has been a disappointment to at least one reader. Granted that this book is not intended to be a serious politico-economico-romantico-historico work (*vide* "One Moment, Please"), so many aspects of Latin America are touched upon that a little study somewhere along the line would have helped considerably. In view of the author's friendly, non-academic approach, maybe it isn't fair to quibble over a sprinkling of statistical errors, incorrect historical data, and what might be described as the "jack-rabbit coverage" of Latin America. Uncle Don, after all, is not expected to help the kiddies with their home work. Mr. Ybarra has perhaps unwittingly epitomized his own efforts when he says: "I cannot vouch for this [*i.e.*, the existence of a woman lawyer in Argentina], my time in South America having been too limited for toilsome, patient exploration."

H. J. T.

Miscellaneous

BIRDS IN THE GARDEN AND HOW TO ATTRACT THEM. By Margaret McKenny. Reynal & Hitchcock. 1939. 349 *pp., with index.* $5.

After reading Miss McKenny's book, it would seem as impossible to plan the grounds around your house without the birds in mind as it would to plan a house without a staircase. There are more reasons why you should cultivate birds than why you shouldn't. In fact, Miss McKenny points out only one disadvantage, and that is you can't have cats if you want birds—they won't mix.

In a chapter on planting in a small garden to provide food and cover, the author gives a detailed and helpful list of plants, including trees, shrubs, vines, and even a ground cover. According to Miss McKenny, it is not difficult to cultivate the birds and have them settle down with you once they discover they are liking the berries on your dogwoods and vibernums.

There is much valuable information in this book, not only for the beginner who is eager to learn about birds but for the serious gardener as well, who will find a wealth of material in the carefully planned lists, in the back of the book, of shrubs that attract birds. There are also descriptions of the birds likely to be found in our gardens, and a great deal can be learned from the excellent illustrations, particularly the photographs.

V. B. S.

THREE YEARS DOWN. By Jonathan Norton Leonard. Carrick & Evans. 1939. 320 *pp., with index.* $2.75.

It is a commentary upon the kaleidoscopic impression which our hurried daily lives make that writers should feel it necessary to summarize the news and trends of years still fresh upon us. If we have a clear recollection of any years, that of the beginning of the great depression should be sharp. But a reading of Mr. Leonard's swift and rather bitter pages reminds us how easy it is to forget even striking incidents. Many in Wall Street would need to jog their memories at mention of the $100,000,000 bond purchase pool.

Mr. Leonard retells the economic story of 1929-1932 in the United States. It was, he said, a complete psychopathic cycle. The mad rush upward was followed by a pathetic patchwork effort to restore confidence, to find easy remedies, and to pretend that they effected a cure. His story is not statistical; he merely selects point after point to recreate the sense (or lack of it) of the national mind.

Perhaps Mr. Leonard's story will strike some as too unrelieved a picture. He cites only two voices crying in the wilderness. There were others, but, it must be admitted, they were few. His style is sharp and rapid, his summary on the whole is admirable.

C. McD. P.

CAROLINA GARDENS. By E. T. H. Shaffer. University of North Carolina Press. 1939. 326 *pp.* $3.50.

This very good book should not be confused with the mere publicity accounts of Southern gardens that have been too often published. It differs also from the books on the Charleston region in that it covers inland gardens as well as the gardens in the low country. Furthermore, while it is minutely descriptive, readable, and excellently illustrated, there is a background of history, both social and economic, which makes it a real contribution to the history of plantation life. Thus its value and interest extend beyond the appeal to lovers of gardens. Du Bose Heyward has written a foreword.

H. S. C.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
TIME OFF FOR MURDER *Zelda Popkin* (Lippincott: $2.)	N. Y. woman lawyer found slain in furnace of vacant house. Mary Carner department-store detective, risks own life but gets double killer.	Desiccated aristocrats, wealthy playboys, tough cops, slimy vice-lords all play dramatic parts in capitally constructed and breathlessly exciting yarn.	First Class!
DEATH THUMBS A RIDE *Jean Lilly* (Dutton: $2.)	Gem robberies and brace of sudden deaths plunge vacationing law officer into swirl of Adirondack crime.	So long as you keep track of all plots involved its O. K., but that's a pretty tough job.	Intricate
BRIGHT STAR OF DANGER *Whitman Chambers* (Doubleday, Doran: $2.)	Bill Lowell, Mary O'More and Co. thwart villainous mob on Bahamian cay, ride out hurricane, and find happiness.	Tropical scene, language, action, and what have you, leading up to tempestuous finale that demolishes malefactors en masse.	Thriller
ADVENTURE IN WASHINGTON *Leonard Ross* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.)	Washington newspaper man risks ruin of reputation to put wicked lobbyist where he belongs.	No murders but plenty of excitement and knowledgeable account of behind-scenes activities in nation's capital.	Pretty thin

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

A Sonnet for Sciatica

WHEN teeth and eyes and guts begin to slump
Indulgence gets the pay-off it deserves:
Then rheumatism downward from the rump
Plays pizzicato on sciatic nerves.
My carnal carcase is worth less than tuppence,
As full of twinge as bonework in a shad,
And, ultimate undignified come-uppance,
I go to bed with an electric pad.

But though they praise me that I lie so quiet
And let the voltage toast me to a cinder,
I am more keen than anybody knows:
My mind is weaving curlicues of riot
For now at last there's nothing that can hinder
Dictating some straightforward English prose.

GRICE PATTERSON.

☞Old Panchromatic celebrated the 500th year of proofreading by a mid-winter Hiatus. ☞He didn't even take with him his knapsack of boblishers' dope. ☞Here he has no company except the gray squirrels (the birds of winter) in the bare trees. ☞He can write a column that has in it no News whatever; only what he's actually thinking; his Tusculan Disputations. ☞Until you have learned how to be alone you know nothing about literature; you are only a librolescent. ☞Old Q.'s favorite poem on Friday evenings is Cowper's *To the Immortal Memory of the Halibut on which I Dined This Day.* ☞Reading poetry (at its best) requires the concentration of a terrier watching a rat-hole; to see what meaning may emerge. ☞In the case of Shakespeare, if you feel too lazy to try to figure out the meaning of a passage, you can always say the text is corrupt. ☞For instance, that odd bit about the city-woman in *As You Like It,* Act II, Scene 7. ☞One of our present regrettables is the Decay of Anonymity. ☞It is tragic to read of airplane attacks on the light-ship services, which were always supposed to be outside warfare. ☞Teachers of literature also try to keep lights burning in a large and stormy darkness. ☞The reader of books is the only one who both eats his cake and has it. ☞The symbolism you need is always close at hand if you take time to look round. ☞What we need is more literature that Doesn't Make Sense.

☞This is the season to eat scrapple and read Hazlitt; both contain the same kind of spice and lard and nourishment. ☞We suddenly realized the other day that Saroyan has some of the qualities of De Quincey; and what a movie the *Opium Eater* would make. ☞We use the handsome new Oxford Press edition of Keats (edited by Garrod) for *sortes Keatsianae;* we open it at random to get suggestions for the day's doings. ☞Doing so, our forefinger struck a line about "an intestine broil." At once we went out and had Mixed London Grill for lunch. ☞We remember how a college professor, living in a city street, used to scandalize his prim neighbors and his own conventional-minded children by having a load of wood dumped on the pavement in front of the house. Then he would put on an old pair of gloves and enjoy himself heaving the billets through the cellar window into the bin. ☞This was his subconscious hankering, in a life too citified, for a little touch of simple reality. ☞Just about the same small proportion of the actual is desirable in college teaching. ☞Not too much; for what does Reality mean to the young? Nix: they live, and they should, in a lucky idealism of the impossible and the unblemished, in radio music and bank nights and pop bottles and comic strips. ☞And a college course bears the same relation to education as our college professor's wood-chore does to forestry and lumberjacking. ☞In education the billets come already chopped and seasoned and delivered to the sidewalk. We put on gloves and pile them neatly in the cellar. ☞Anyone who thinks to get more than that, in the undergraduate era, will actually get less.

☞Old Q. is very happy sitting on a stump in a sleetstorm thinking. ☞Right by this stump, one day last spring, we made a discovery: that the swift and pliable snake and the slow horny turtle are marked with the same yellow-and-black pattern; just as the two opposites, coal and ice, come from the same dealer. ☞Wondering what one of those squirrels was carrying round in his mouth, it's a page from Dr. Rosenbach's latest catalogue offering the original autograph MS of Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* for $18,500. One of the editors of *Selborne* has remarked "It is only as one advances in years that the peace and restfulness of this most delightful book impresses the mind." ☞Riding in a plane over the fields of Minnesota we observed that all the farmhouses had a windbreak of evergreen trees on the north and west sides. ☞Which is exactly what literature is; man's attempt at an evergreen windbreak against winter and rough weather.

☞Richardson Wright, with his trained nostril for all vintage oddity, uncovers (in his *Grandfather Was Queer*) one of the earliest PERSONALS columns. It ran in the N. Y. *Gazette* about 1760, and (as with our own) the editor was sometimes perplexed by indiscreet offerings. ☞One such he reproached thus: "Mr. Z., if he pleases, may call for the piece he sent us last Week, when he shall have returned one-half of the Money he sent to have it inserted, whilst the other half we shall keep to pay for this Notice; as his Subject is unfit for a News-paper." ☞When the Wallabian Pocket Books reprint (as of course they will) their 25c edition of *Treasure Island,* they should of course include the famous Map, without which the book is sadly incomplete.

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Records in Review

BY EDWARD TATNALL CANBY

COLUMBIA'S January samples have not arrived in time for review; I will report on the Handel Concerto Grosso No. 6 and Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony next month. Columbia has announced a series of "play it yourself" recordings of chamber music with one part missing, (Add-a-Part records) and has released a flood of thirty-two albums and a dozen-odd single discs, with more to come. An obscure series of this sort came over from pre-Nazi Austria but was not generally available. The majority of the recordings omit the first violin (inevitably the rankest beginner shuns the second fiddle!) but there is also music for the pianist and the cellist. Alas, the viola is not mentioned; it is, I think, the coming instrument for the amateur. Like first tenors, viola players are welcome in any musical circle. The score for the missing part is provided, and the works are graded easy, medium, and difficult. * * * For years a complete "Meistersinger" has been demanded in vain. In 1936, R. D. Darrell lamented the lack and listed in detail in his Encyclopedia every scrap of recorded "Meistersinger," good and bad, for those who couldn't wait. Now from Germany via England the complete Act III has arrived, with a special release by Victor (M-537: $20 and M-538: $10). Performance is by the Saxon State Orchestra, Dresden Opera Chorus, Hans Nissen as Sachs, Martin Kremer as Walther, Eugen Fuchs as Beckmesser, M. Teschemacher as Eva. I assure those who shy at these unfamiliar names that although none of the soloists reach the Flagstad-Melchior plane, the performance as a whole is most satisfying, well balanced, with no glaring faults. True, Sachs wobbles a bit, Walther's low notes are thin, Eva is a bit pallid, but none of this is really disturbing. Beckmesser is excellent, and the choral singing is unusually fine. The recording is exceptionally good, especially of the orchestra. Vol. II (scene 2) is technically the finest mass recording I have heard. Especially valuable is the German English libretto. * * * I must disagree with some reviewers of Koussevitzky's Beethoven Second Symphony (M-625: $7) who hear in it more K. than B. Knowing Koussevitzky's proclivities in that direction I was pleasantly surprised to find more Beethoven in this than in some performances by those who label the second symphony "Mozartean." Both composers have suffered from that unfortunate comparison. Recording is perfect. It seems to me that Victor has recently mellowed its Higher Fidelity from something painful to sensitive ears towards a real approximation of the higher tonal ranges, so clearly missing on older recordings. Perhaps I'm just getting used to it. * * * A similar surprise was Kreisler's Mozart Violin Concerto No. 4 in D (M-623: $6.50). A bit too pure, but I am still inclined to be grateful, especially since for once—and this is the more amazing—we find an excellent balance between solo and orchestra, something rare in recorded concertos. * * * I have wasted a number of hours listening to Shostakovitch's Fifth; (M-619. $12). In spite of all reports to the contrary, I find it poor music. A beautiful sense of orchestration, even a wealth of emotion cannot hide a lack of knowledge of the actual technique of music. Mr. S. needs nothing more than a thorough dose of strict counterpoint; his melodies lead nowhere, he leaves notes hanging in mid-air. A composer would say he has no sense of line. A certain appealing piquancy, a playfulness of orchestration, which were the best features of his first symphony, have been put aside as though childish. Perhaps a sense of humor is undesirable in Russia. I ignore the political aspects of this work as being beside the point. * * * The recorder, a more able member of the ocarina-tin whistle tribe, is having a tremendous vogue today. The Trapp family choir gives us a record of recorder music which will be a revelation to countless strugglers on that instrument. (V-2012. $1.50) * * * Watch for releases of a small one-man company called Technichord, in Brookline, Mass. A recording of J. C. Bach flute and harpsichord sonata is beautifully done (T-1538. $1.50) and is a worthy companion to last month's J. C. Bach concerto.

PERSONALS

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Double-Crostics: No. 304

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

			1-U	2-N	3-W	4-M	5-C	6-A	7-V		8-K	9-S	10-A		11-X	12-U
13-Y	14-T	15-S	16-M	17-H	18-A		19-E	20-F	21-B		22-Y	23-D	24-M	25-W	26-A	
27-J	28-K	29-Q	30-Y	31-B	32-O	33-A	34-P	35-I	36-S		37-I	38-P	39-S	40-M	41-R	42-L
43-Y	44-Q	45-V	46-B		47-F	48-E	49-H		50-S	51-T	52-I		53-K	54-M	55-D	56-R
	57-Y	58-Q	59-X	60-M	61-R	62-E	63-U		64-L	65-B		66-C	67-H		68-N	69-P
70-S	71-U	72-O	73-K	74-J	75-L	76-Y		77-V	78-X	79-P	80-O	81-T	82-Y	83-J		84-F
	85-V	86-M	87-L	88-K	89-T	90-Q	91-O		92-C	93-Q	94-H		95-I		96-X	97-G
98-Q	99-F	100-A	101-W	102-U	103-O		104-K	105-S		106-Y	107-F	108-J	109-T	110-L	111-G	112-B
113-K	114-V		115-S	116-D	117-M	118-J	119-A	120-T		121-M	122-C		123-M	124-Q	125-G	126-L
	127-X	128-L	129-U	130-S	131-V	132-N	133-E	134-C		135-L	136-M		137-T	138-B	139-H	
140-Y	141-L	142-T	143-P	144-W	145-N	146-J	147-S		148-B	149-I		150-G	151-C		152-Y	153-W
154-L	155-P	156-V	157-D	158-O	159-U	160-A	161-X		162-O	163-D		164-B	165-M	166-L		167-N
168-M	169-X	170-B	171-R	172-H		173-T		174-R	175-G	176-Y		177-E	178-D	179-Q	180-R	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 21 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Fierce.

B. Biographer of Cardinal Wolsey.

C. Novel by Rider Haggard.

D. Important English Bill of 1832.

E. Daughter of Peneus.

F. Indian of Peruvian coast.

G. Poem by Keats.

H. Poet Laureate 1718-1730.

I. German poet (1769-1860).

J. Kind of domestic pigeon.

K. Shaggy with soft hairs.

L. Not to be overcome.

M. Overbearing master (4 words; fig.)

N. Choice part.

O. Philippine natives of Central Luzon.

P. Nobel Prize playwright.

Q. Character in "Troilus and Cressida."

R. Practice of Hindu mental discipline.

S. Confuses.

T. Customary.

U. Snaring.

V. Old men.

W. Jot, particle.

X. Applaud.

Y. Virginia port.

WORDS

A. 10 160 26 6 119 33 18 100

B. 31 164 112 46 170 21 148 65 138

C. 66 134 122 151 5 92

D. 23 116 163 178 55 157

E. 133 19 177 48 62

F. 47 107 20 99 84

G. 111 175 125 150 97

H. 139 49 172 94 17 67

I. 95 52 35 37 149

J. 27 108 74 83 118 146

K. 53 28 88 8 104 73 113

L. 64 75 126 166 42 128 135 141 154 87 110

M. 123 136 40 60 24 117 4 168 54 121 86 165 16

N. 145 132 68 167 2

O. 32 44 91 158 80 162 103 72

P. 34 69 143 38 155 79

Q. 58 90 98 179 93 124 29

R. 56 41 171 61 180 174

S. 50 115 105 130 39 70 15 147 9 36

T. 51 109 89 137 173 14 81 142 120

U. 1 71 129 159 12 102 63

V. 45 131 85 77 156 7 114

W. 144 3 25 101 153

X. 127 161 96 59 78 169 11

Y. 82 30 57 140 106 43 76 176 152 22 13

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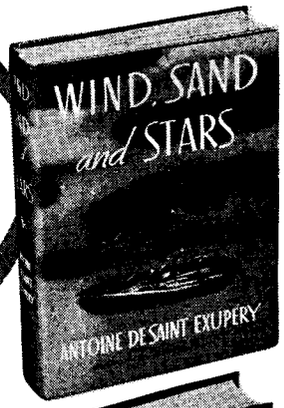

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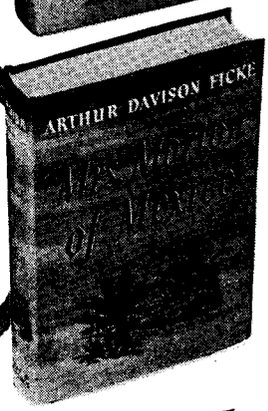

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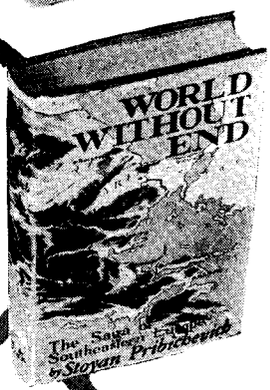

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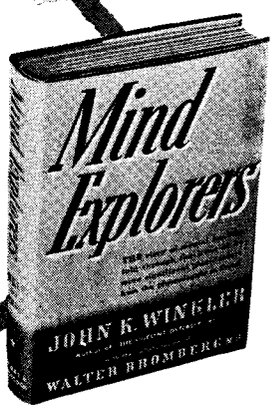

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